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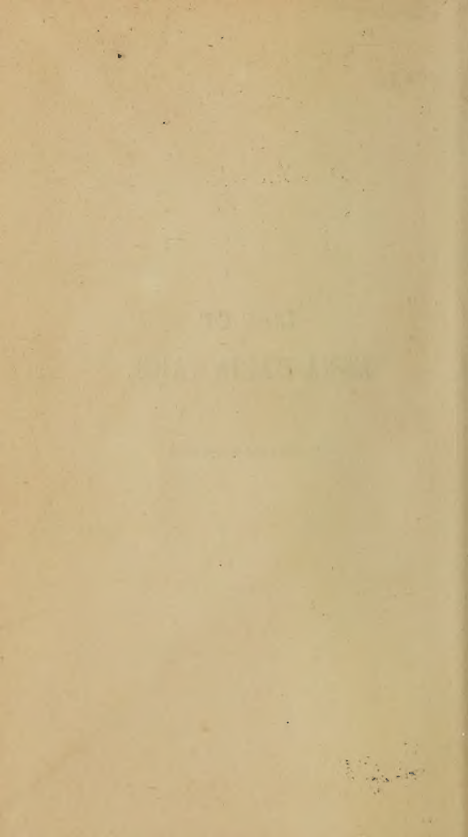




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LIFE OF  
ANNA MARIA TAIGI.

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LIFE OF  
ANNA MARIA TAIGI,  
A HOLY WOMAN,  
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH,  
SAN JOSE, CAL.

WHO ATTAINED, IN THE ~~MARRIED~~ STATE, AND AMIDST  
THE CARES OF A FAMILY, AND THE TRIALS OF POVERTY,  
TO SUCH EMINENT SANCTITY, THAT THE PROCESS OF HER  
CANONIZATION IS NOW GOING ON AT ROME.

SHE DIED IN 1837.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN LIVES

WRITTEN BY

THE RIGHT REV. DR. LUQUET,

BISHOP OF HESEBON.

BY A

SISTER OF PROVIDENCE.

---

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THE AMERICAN

REVIEW

OF THE

AMERICAN

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OF THE

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REVIEW

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Towards defraying the expenses incidental to the process of the Canonization of Anna Maria Taigi received by

Mrs. (Laura) de Lisle, \*  
Garendon Park,  
Loughborough.

## ALSO BY

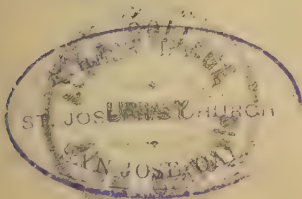
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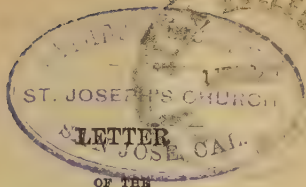
or at Derby.

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\* Mrs. de Lisle's address is now as given above not Gracedieu Manor.







## BISHOP OF HESEBON.

---

In presenting to the public the life of Anna Maria Taigi, it seems fitting that the following letter and its English translation should be placed at the beginning, with the hope that our readers may be induced to comply with the earnest request of the zealous Bishop of Hesebon, and all according to their means contribute towards defraying the expenses incidental to the process of the canonization of his holy servant of God.\*

\* In order to facilitate subscriptions being sent for this holy object, we beg to inform our readers that any sum, however small, may be sent either in stamps or P. O. O. to

Mrs. (Laura) de Lisle,  
Garendon Park,  
Loughborough.

This Lady will take care to forward her receipts to the Bishop of Hesebon. at Rome, every two months.

Nel Nome SSmo. di  
Dio, Amen.

*Roma, 16 Aprile,  
1854.*

Il sottoscritto Ves-  
covo di Hesebon Pos-  
tulatoro della causa  
della serva di Dio  
*Anna Maria Taigi*,  
non ignorando l'in-  
teresse, che ha preso  
la Signora Laura  
Phillipps (de Lisle) per  
la nominata serva di  
Dio, si prende la ris-  
pettosa libertà di pre-  
garla di lei pietà a  
volere coadjuvare la  
d<sup>a</sup> causa, onde por-  
tarla al bramato ter-  
mine di Beatifica-  
zione, o Canoniza-  
zione di d<sup>a</sup> serva di  
Dio. Quindi è che il  
sottoscritto servendosi  
delle facoltà inerenti

In the most holy  
name of God, Amen.

*Rome, April 16,  
1854.*

The undersigned  
Bishop of Hesebon.  
Postulator of the suit  
of the servant of God  
*Anna Maria Taigi*  
not being ignorant of  
the interest which  
Mrs. Laura Phillipps  
(de Lisle) takes in the  
above named servan-  
t of God, takes the li-  
berty of begging her  
to assist the suit till  
it is brought to its  
wished for termina-  
tion, viz., the Beatifi-  
cation and Canoniza-  
tion of the servant of  
God. Hence it is  
that the undersigned  
making use of the  
prerogative of his of-



alla sua nomina, prega la d<sup>a</sup> pia e virtuosa Signora ad accettare la carica, con cui viene colla presente nominata di *Collettrice di Elemosine*, che la sua industriosa carità potrà raccogliere dalle sue relazioni particolarmente dalle caritate per servire alle spese necessarie all' indicato scopo, e rimetterlo in Roma al Sottoscritto Postulatore.

La D<sup>a</sup> pia Signora avrà la compiacenza di aver contribuito a far conoscere al Mondo questo esempio virtuoso del Matrimonio, e la Serva di Dio non mancherà di proteg-

fice, begs the said pious and virtuous lady to accept the burden which he imposes on her, to consent to become the *receiver of whatever alms* her industrious charity may be able to collect among her acquaintances, particularly those that are married, in order to help to defray the necessary expenses consequent on the above named undertaking, and to remit them to Rome to the undersigned Postulator.

The above named pious lady will have the satisfaction of having contributed to make known to the world, this virtuous model of the married state. And the ser-

gerla, e di ottenerle dal Signore tutte quelle grazie, che le sono necessarie nella sua posizione.

✠ G. F. O. Luquet vesc. di Esebon,

Postulatore nella causa della Serva di Dio,

Anna Maria Taigi.

vant of God will not fail to protect her, and to obtain for her from the Lord all the graces that are necessary in her station.

✠ G. F. O. Luquet, Bishop of Hesebon,

Postulator of the suit of the Servant of God,

Anna Maria Taigi.

## PREFACE.

---

This translation, partly from the Italian, partly from the French, of the life of the great servant of God, Anna Maria Taigi, (the first step towards whose canonization has been taken since this was begun), has been written from the consideration of how useful it would be to those who like Anna Maria are wives and mothers of families, and many also like her, in a class of life in which they have to labour to support their families and to struggle with the hardships and difficulties of poverty. How many are there of these, who feel so overburdened with the multiplied cares and troubles they meet with, that they are inclined to put off to a future day, when, as they hope, they shall have more leisure and tranquillity, the care of their immortal souls. How many others who though they do not positively neglect their religious duties, feel that sanctity and perfection are not for them. From the example of this blessed soul they may learn that these

very cares and troubles, which they look upon as obstacles, may be made the means of saving their souls, and obtaining a high degree of sanctity. How many again are there who, having like Anna Maria, sinned against God and mis-spent the time given them to grow in His knowledge and love, despair of becoming really good and holy. From this life it would appear that God, to convince men of their error in thus doubting of His infinite mercy, has been pleased again to pour His richest treasures on one, who did not always follow in the path of holiness, and thus to rouse souls, whom the devil keeps in the cruel chains of discouragement, generously to cast themselves on the boundless mercy of God, and while grieving intensely for having offended so good a Master, to strive to atone for the past by greater and more fervent love for the future. So that not only may be said of them as of that blessed penitent, St. Mary Magdalen, that many sins are forgiven them because they have loved much, but also, that they have loved more because of the many great sins that have been forgiven them. Indeed, and it is the sentiment of a very great and holy man, great sinners may become the greater saints, on account of the effort and the difficulty by which they rise from so terrible a state to one of holiness. This is a thought to which

poor sinners like ourselves may turn with great comfort, while with sorrowful humility we envy holy souls their sweet privilege of innocence, and though we cannot bring God a heart never stained by sin, one which has always loved Him and done His will, at least we can rejoice and bless Him that there are some who carry their baptismal robes to His throne pure from all mortal stain.

But while we feel that this life is well calculated to help many in the all-important work, we think that in order especially to its being of the use we hope and trust it may be, to those for whose benefit in particular it has been translated, a few words of explanation are necessary.

It is certain that God calls all to save and sanctify their souls, in whatever state of life they may be, but it is only to a few, generally for the sake of others more even than for themselves, that He grants special gifts and graces like those bestowed on Anna Maria, such as extasies, the gifts of miracles and prophecy. She would have been no less holy, no less pleasing to God without these gifts, they were perhaps rather proofs of God's being well pleased with her, that others might be led to imitate her virtues, than rewards of her virtue. And it would be in any one of us a sure way of exposing ourselves to the delusion

of the enemy to desire any such thing. We should by so doing render ourselves unworthy and incapable of imitating that which by God's grace we may imitate, the beautiful virtues of this holy soul. We should assuredly be disappointed and endanger the salvation of our souls.

Even with regard to her virtues we must distinguish what we ought unconditionally and without reserve to imitate: such are her spirit of prayer, her humility, her patience, her charity to her neighbour, her attention to the duties of her state of life, her behaviour as a wife, and in a particular manner her care in bringing up her children, in teaching them their duties as Christians and Catholics, and keeping them from sin and the occasions of sin. If parents only knew and felt how horrible and fearful a thing sin is, how carefully would they guard their children from it. But with regard to her extraordinary fasts and other austerities, it would not be right for all to undertake them, certainly not without permission from their confessor, though in this too she gives an example, since only under obedience to her spiritual guide did she undertake these things.

# LIFE OF ANNA MARIA TAIGI.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### FIRST CROSSES, DANGERS AND FALL.

"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Prov. xxxi. 30.

God has often sent His people models of perfection for those souls whom He has called to a life of retirement, or to the exercise of the holy ministry in His Church. Nor has He withheld this great favour from those whom He has left in the world to attain their salvation amidst domestic occupations and the joys and the sorrows of a life in the bosom of a family. She whose virtues we here describe was of the number of these last.

Whilst living outwardly the most common life in the most humble class of society, fulfilling her domestic duties like others, she was loaded with divine favours, and enriched with extraordinary gifts which rival those of the greatest saints.

Not only was it given her to practise in perfection the virtues of her state; but she received graces, in which, we hope the Church will one day recognize the gift of miracles, in the cure of the sick, and in the knowledge of distant and future things, and of the most secret thoughts hidden in the depths of the heart. It is not for us to anticipate the judgment of the Church in what regards the intimate communications of this soul with Our Lord, with the Blessed Virgin, with her guardian angel, and with the saints; but we experience, and it is only right we should say it, with the most lively feeling of admiration, in reading the account of these most precious colloquies, such an impression, as would necessarily arise in the heart from the instructions of our Divine Master Himself. "Remember," He one day said to her, "that in speaking to thee *I* produce in thee sweetness, peace, compunction, and humility."

We shall relate the remarkable extasies with which God favoured her, and the grace which was granted to her (as to St. Philip Neri), of distinguishing by the sense of smell the state of purity of souls, and we shall speak also of the gift of knowledge and discernment of spirits which she possessed. But above all, and this is our chief end in publishing this life, we shall show how the



faults of a worldly life may be repaired by works of penance, and how a christian soul living in the world may find in the fulfilment of her duties as daughter, wife and mother, means of the greatest sanctification. We shall see how, while practising sweetness, and amiability to all around, perfect mortification of the senses and absolute detachment from creatures may be attained; how though surrounded by a family, a secret sanctuary of recollection and love may be formed in the heart; and how whilst preserving the interior relations of duty and charity towards others, the soul may be wholly withdrawn in God, finding Him alone in all things, conversing only with Him, even when we are obliged to give ourselves to those around us.

In short, we shall show how everywhere and always may be understood and practised that important lesson of our Saviour: "*Regnum Dei intra vos est.*" "*The Kingdom of God is within you.*" Luke xvii. 21.

The privileged soul whose virtues we are relating practised all this in great perfection, verifying in herself what her Divine Master had said to her, "*Remember these three things, which form the substance of perfection: pure love, great fidelity, and perfect abandonment;*" and again, "*The greatest merit consists in being in the midst of the world, and having*

the world under foot. Whosoever will become My Spouse must die to all."

Anna Maria Antonietta Gesulda was born at Sienna May 30th, 1769, her parents' names were, Aloysius Peter and Santa Geannette. She was baptized at the church of St. John Baptist of the same city. In her own family she was called Anna Maria, by which name we shall designate her in what follows.

From her tenderest infancy she was marked with the sign of predestination, the cross, as her celestial Spouse made known to her often afterwards, in the amorous effusions of which she became the object, saying to her, "O My dear daughter, I am the Flower of the field, I am beautiful and I am all for thee, as I am all for those who take up their cross and follow Me. The children of the cross are My children, and when they suffer, they constrain Me to love them evermore. Whoever desires to attain heaven must lead a life of penance and mortification. Whoever wishes to follow Me must suffer, and he who suffers is not under an illusion, but advances on a secure road."

She was scarcely six years old when she began to experience the sufferings caused by extreme poverty. Her father had lived in condition of honest mediocrity, exercising the profession of a chemist; being at that time

ruined through his own fault, he was obliged to leave Sienna, where he had no longer any means of subsistence, and determined to go to Rome; but his poverty was so great that he, with his wife and their little daughter, were obliged to go on foot the whole way. When they reached Rome, the parents of the little girl sought to give her a Christian education, but one which should enable her to earn her livelihood. This was the only treasure they could give, and it is a great treasure, for it enables us to fulfil the first duty imposed on guilty man. "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread." While at the same time it teaches us the means of obtaining our salvation. Blessed is the father who opens such a way to his son, blessed is the mother who shows it to her daughter.

Anna Maria's parents placed her in the school of the nuns, known by the name of the Pious Mistresses, which was not far from their home. Here she prepared for her first Communion, that great act, on which, ordinarily, so much of the future life depends. She was thirteen years of age when in the Church of St. Francis of Paul, she, for the first time, received the most sacred Body of the Divine Word. She received Him into a pure and innocent heart which doubtless contributed towards meriting for her the grace of that

love which she had for this august sacrament in later years. She had, two years previously, received the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Basilica of St. John Lateran. She was an intelligent child, full of life, of an attractive character, and made herself greatly beloved by the mistresses of the school in which she was placed, and she acquired great perfection in the things which were taught there. She remained six years under the care of the nuns, then she left them to assist her mother and support herself by her work, and this she had every reason to think she should be able to do without difficulty.

The world smiled on her and she desired to taste its joys, not suspecting the dangers she should meet with in it. But our Lord had compassion on her, and soon opened her eyes; her modesty preserved her from falling under those temptations to which her youth, her attractions, and the impetuosity of her temperament but too much exposed her. It was in vain that pleasure sought to make an impression; however fatal to so many, it could not add her to the immense number of victims, who, alas! daily fall into abysses perfidiously concealed under flowers. Our Lord and His most holy Mother watched over her; the virtuous young girl found in the grace of her God that prudence which passions would have concealed

from her. She saw that although she had resisted the first attacks of the enemy, she was not therefore guaranteed against a future fall. She felt on the contrary, that the only means of avoiding the danger was to fly from it. She resolved to place her virtue in security under the guardianship of a chaste marriage.

She showed great wisdom in the choice of her future husband. Setting aside all thought of what the social position of her family had been, she saw, that having been reduced to poverty, she ought not to look higher than to one, who should gain his livelihood by the labour of his hands, and she therefore resolved to consider only the virtue of the husband, whom Providence should offer her; she desired to find one of good habits, who lived in the fear of God, and determined to refuse none, on account of the meanness of the profession he might exercise, thus, beginning to practise the virtue of Christian humility, of which she afterwards gave so many heroic proofs. She thus entered by anticipation into the sentiments which our Lord suggested to her at a later period, saying to her: "However great any one's desire may be to love Me, if he enters not on the straight road of humility, he stumbles continually and knows not how to attain, nor can he ever attain to My love. Man has as it were, a dust upon his heart, the

dust of self-love, which covers, as with a veil, the eyes of the soul, and thus spoils all his actions. Man is full of pride, and I have nothing to do with the proud; the humble alone please Me, to them I am prodigal of the treasures of My grace: whoever tastes my delights ought to despise the world and be despised by it, as I Myself was. I rest in humble souls full of simplicity; the more lowly and simple, so much the more do I take delight in them; but as for those wise and learned ones, as for those whose heads are full of the fumes of pride, I bring them down and thou knowest where I send them, where their false wisdom and their pride come to an end. O My daughter, I exalt those who humble themselves; they render themselves worthy of My Kingdom, and I reveal to them all My secrets. Love, then, contempt, since such is the true foundation of virtue. Whosoever, with faith and true zeal possesses the gift of suffering with patience the contempt of the world, shall be truly My son and My disciple."

A short time after the important resolution relative to her marriage was taken, the husband whom God destined for her presented himself; he was exactly such an one as was needed to make her enter most perfectly into the designs of Providence. His name was Dominic Taigi,

Milanese, attached to the house of Chigi, in which he was employed as one of the inferior servants. He was a man of good habits, but his exacting and somewhat capricious character gave Anna Maria many opportunities of acquiring virtue, and his humble occupation was admirably suited for the execution of the future designs of God. Anna Maria was in fact destined to sanctify herself in a life of great poverty, almost absolute want.

In a few days the marriage was decided on, and it was celebrated the 7th of January, 1798, in the Church of St. Marcellus.

The time was not yet come in which our Lord was to call the young bride to a perfect life; she loved virtue, it is true, but pleasure had also attractions for her. Without failing in the duties of conjugal fidelity, she gave herself up with all the ardour of her character to the diversions of which the Italian people, especially in the city of Rome, are so fond. She loved dress, the theatre and amusements; and in her imprudence she did not see that thus to forget God for the world was almost inevitably to precipitate herself into an abyss. Like so many other heedless ones she left the right road, through a fatal presumption, and did not perceive that the instinctive desire of pleasing, inherent in the hearts of women, is

one of the most dangerous tendencies which they have to fight against.

In fact, as St. Basil so well expresses it, "if every man who looks upon a woman with desire has already committed adultery; the woman on her side who seeks in her dress to excite the passions of corrupt man, is equally guilty in her heart."\*

Anna Maria indeed had not to reproach herself with so culpable an intention in the endeavour she made to please and to shine as much as her condition permitted her to do. But if the words of the great Doctor whom we have cited, express a truth of the greatest importance, those which follow them are no less true or less terrible to those unhappy beings who therein find their condemnation. "O Christian women," says St. Cyprian, "if you adorn yourself luxuriously, if you walk proudly in public, if you attract the eyes of youth, if you cause young men to sigh after you, if you inflame their desires so that though you may not fall yourself, yet you are the occasion of other's fall, if you become a sword or a poison to those who look upon you there is no excuse for you, you cannot be regarded as chaste or pure."

In some respects the passion for finery had

\* Commentary on the II. Chapter of Isaiah.



rendered Anna Maria guilty, as the subsequent all fully proves. As to herself, she did not perceive how, by opening her heart to the deceitful charm of flattery under which so many fall, she was preparing her own ruin. She did not consider that increasing by the charms of the theatre and feasts, the ardent love of pleasure which dwelt within her she was preparing her imagination and her senses for certain defeat. In short, like too many she was playing at the edge of a precipice, and like others, she fell in.

She might perhaps, (notwithstanding her imprudence, and as she was really attached to her duties) have avoided the most dangerous all if a temptation above all others serious, had not come across her path.

One of those men in whom age had, instead of extinguishing passion rather augmented it, one who realised the fruit of a youth of impurity by perfection in the art of seduction, selected Anna Maria for one of his victims. He pursued this unhappy woman with an obstinate perseverance which a more perfect virtue could hardly have resisted. Secret meetings and clever surprises, hateful schemes and abominable means were all infamously arranged, and he succeeded. Worn out with attentions, pursued, solicited, and deceived,

Anna Maria fell into his snares rather through importunity than passion.

It was the error of a day; but the tears and sufferings of a whole life appeared to her small reparations through the remainder of her life. The infinite mercy of God was pleased to accept this penitence, so that this guilty woman should become a vessel of honour and sanctification.

The polluted body, it is true, had to expiate on the cross and in its agonies, the insult offered to eternal justice; but the soul purified by penitence, became the object of especial satisfaction in the eyes of the Divine Goodness. This restitution was not however effected without powerful solicitations of grace, nor without a dangerous resistance on the part of her whom our Lord had resolved to draw entirely to Himself.

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## CHAPTER II.

### HER CONVERSION.

"I found Him whom my soul loveth, I held Him and I will not let Him go."—CANT. iii. 4

Meanwhile Anna Maria's heart was ill at ease, she felt all that sadness which is the

first pain which God sends to a soul into which hardened impenitence has not yet penetrated. She felt keenly the effects of that bitter but too just punishment of which the Fathers speak. "What peace can dwell in the soul of a woman who feels her husband's presence a torture and her conscience a scourge?"\* In fact, instead of that peace of heart, the deep-felt and lasting reward granted to a virtuous wife, Anna Maria endured continual agitation and bitter regret. Instead of that chaste and confiding love which a Christian woman feels towards the husband God has given her, she experienced in her husband's presence a constant feeling of fear and confusion following on the secret shame consequent on such a fall as hers. One sole remedy presented itself in such a terrible misfortune, the humiliation of penance before God. We shall see with what ardour she sought this remedy afterwards—but for some time she tried to find some consolation elsewhere, or at least distraction sufficient to silence the voice of remorse. A worldly life and its mad pleasures seemed to afford her such a resource, and notwithstanding the ear-

\* "Quæ igitur quies est animæ, cui vel maritus est pro supplicio, vel conscientia pro flagello?" St. Hildeberti Turon Archiep. Epist. xxxvi.

nest solicitations of grace, she sought to divert her thoughts by yielding to them. How many souls, by taking this fatal step, have opened for themselves the road to eternal perdition! But Divine Goodness ceased not to pursue in a special manner this erring soul.

One day, as she was going to St. Peter's fully dressed and prepared for the false joys of the world, which so often hide so much bitterness in the depths of the heart, she met a holy religious priest, whom she did not know and who had had nothing to do with her. This priest heard, as he afterwards related, the voice of his Divine Master saying to him "Dost thou see that woman? thou wilt one day have to direct her; thou wilt convert her she will be a saint." This religious, who belonged to the Servites of Mary, was much struck by so remarkable a circumstance, and he did as the Blessed Virgin had done, on witnessing the wondrous mysteries manifested in the person of the Saviour of the world, he kept these words and pondered them in his heart.

But some time was to elapse before the promise of our Lord was fulfilled, although Anna Maria was continually conscious that grace urged her to abandon the vanities of the world, and to be reconciled to God. At length one day, when she was more than usu

lly agitated, she determined resolutely to change her life, to give herself up entirely to her duties, and to walk generously in the path of virtue. She went into a church, and knelt down in a confessional, in which there happened to be a priest, "Father, you see at your feet a great sinner." Such were the first and the only words which she addressed to him, for he gave her no time to say more; on hearing an avowal drawn from her by the bitter feeling of its truth, he thought it would be followed by the lamentable history of sins, alas so frequent in the sad world in which we live, and he would listen no further, but forgetting that the more guilty this soul might be, the greater need had she of condescension and charity to aid her to rise from the abyss of sin, forgetting that he ran the risk of throwing her into despair and impenitence, and of causing her to fall into hell, he repulsed her roughly, and shut the door of the confessional, saying to her harshly: "Go, you are not my penitent." The poor woman, discouraged by this reply, full of grief and confusion, as may be easily understood, went away, and again delayed her perfect return to God. When our Lord was in the presence of a woman who had fallen into crime, He had said to her, speaking of the proud Pharisees of His time, "Where are they that ac-

cused thee? Hath no man condemned thee? .....Neither will I condemn thee. Go and now sin no more." John viii. 10, 11. Again another time He said of a great sinner, "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." St. Luke vii. 47. He had said that in the kingdom of His Father, "there is more joy upon one sinner that doth penance than over ninety-nine just who need not penance." Luke xv. 7. And He had said again by the mouth of His prophet: "Wash yourselves, be clean.....and then come and accuse Me, saith the Lord; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; and if they be as red as crimson, they shall be as white as wool." Isaias i. 16, 18. This is what our Lord both said and did in the presence of the proud Pharisee: He compassionated the humble and the weak, who confessed the greatest sins. And towards a soul, though guilty, much less criminal, towards a soul, whose eternal salvation might perhaps depend on the manner in which he then treated her, how could a minister of a God of peace, of pardon, and of love act thus? What a lesson, O my God, for those whom Thou hast called to the tremendous ministry of the direction of consciences; and how clearly it teaches the whole meaning of those words of our Lord at a later period to His

humble servant, "these confessors cause the loss of souls, and therefore I Myself direct them."

Anna Maria left the church to which she had come to seek the peace she needed, and light to guide her in the paths of penance. She was sad and discouraged, but the dart of love which had pierced her, remained in her heart; she no longer resisted fresh impulses of grace.

A few months passed on, when one day she felt herself strongly drawn to go to the church of St. Marcellinus, there to become reconciled to God. She had determined nothing with regard to the choice of a director, but did as she had done before when she was so ill received; she entered the first confessional in which there was a priest. It was that of the very religious whom she had met near St. Peter's. The man of God soon recognised in Anna Maria the woman whom the voice of God had pointed out to him, and the first words which he said to her were, "So you are come at last," and he told her what had happened to him.

It may easily be imagined what an impression was made on the mind of the confessor by so remarkable an occurrence; and if we consider the state of this poor blind soul, and the sincere desire of conversion of which her

heart was full, we may form some idea of the ardour with which Anna Maria entered again on the path of virtue, and the zeal with which he directed her in it. This good religious showed the greatest charity to his penitent in the general confession which he desired her to make, and admitted her to the holy tribunal as often as she desired it, bestowing on her the most assiduous care, and most pious counsels. He continually encouraged her to aspire to the highest perfection, as well as to the practice of common virtue, and to this end his instructions always tended, showing further the most tender piety, and the zeal of the confessor corresponded fully with the desires of sanctification which filled the soul of his penitent.

Under such wise and fervent direction Anna Maria soon entered on the way of renunciation and of sacrifice, which God discloses immediately to such souls as desire to give themselves entirely to Him. With the consent of her husband and by the advice of her confessor, she at once left off all the fine clothes and ornaments, which many young persons wear to flatter their vanity, even when their families are in want of necessaries, and even often to the prejudice of their honour and virtue. She dressed as became her station in life, her only ornament being



that of reserve and modesty. If we compare her past life with the one she now began to lead, we may apply to her what St. Bernard said of worldly women, and of those who are not worldly. Of the worldly he says: "They are clothed in purple and fine linen, which cover a conscience in rags; they are all resplendent with jewels, and their dress causes others to blush." To the unworldly he says: "Thou, on the contrary, art clothed in coarse cloth, but shining with beauty within; but this beauty appears only to the eyes of God, and not to those of men."\*

Anna Maria was not satisfied with the first expiation of the past; she embraced the rigours of penance with such ardour that her confessor was obliged to moderate her pious imprudence in it. A circumstance which her Divine Master prepared for her, increased still more this fervour of her soul. She was one day in the house with her mother, who was reading aloud in a book of devotion a passage about the last judgment, and on hearing it Anna Maria felt herself struck with so lively a feeling of penitence and love, that it seemed to her as if her heart would burst, her eyes

\* *Induuntur purpura et bysso et subinde conscientia pannosa jacet: fulgent monilibus, moribus sordent. E contra tu foris pannosa, intus speciosa resplendes, sed divinis, aspectibus, non humanis.*

became two fountains of tears, the sweetness of divine love united to a feeling of penitence inundated her with ineffable delights, and the voice of her Divine Master completed the work by saying: "See, my daughter, my beloved spouse, see here that Father who has followed thee continually, Who from thy mother's womb hath elected thee for sanctity. Thou must love no other but Me, and I will guide Thee. This is the reason why, when thou wert living in the midst of the vanities of the world, I never abandoned thee, why I have preserved thee from so many dangers and from death; because I love thee tenderly, and one day thou shalt know who speaks to thee."

From that instant her loving desire for so many graces had no limits; her penances were redoubled, and, as one of her confessors relates, on one occasion seized with an extraordinary grief for having offended God, and with hatred for sin, she struck her face against the ground with so much violence that blood ran from her mouth; but this vehemence was then forbidden her. Such traits are sufficient to show how ardent, in the beginning of her conversion, was the love of this soul for her only Good, to Whom she had the happiness of attaching herself for ever, and we shall see as we continue our narrative, how

generous Divine Mercy was with regard to her, and with what abundant liberality she was rewarded for the fulness of her sacrifice.

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### CHAPTER III.

“Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.”—Ps. xxxiii. 9

It is a truth most consoling to our weakness, particularly for those who aspire to the perfect life, that to work out our salvation and to attain the glory of the saints, but one thing is required of us, a good will. “My son, give Me thy heart, and let thy eyes keep My ways” Prov. xxiii. 26. These words contain all that our Lord asks of us, so that it always depends on ourselves to offer to God the good will of our hearts, and the docility which grace requires to preserve in us the purity of innocence, or to bring us back by penance, if we have had the misfortune to fall into sin. The gift of salvation, the gift of Christian perfection will never be granted to the soul in which our Lord sees not an entire efficacious, and truly good will; but when this sanctifying disposition is found in a heart, there are no favours she may not hope for, no

treasures in which she may not participate, in the degree which Divine Providence designs for each one of us, and the generous soul of whom we speak experienced this fully. She had scarcely corresponded with all the fulness of her heart, to the grace which was leading her to follow in the steps of her Beloved, than she was inundated with sensible graces and favoured with extraordinary gifts, of which it belongs to the Church alone to determine the certainty and extent, but of which authentic testimonies are given. This is what we read in the accounts which we have of these favours: "I will confine myself at present," said a person who knew well the depths of this great soul, "to speaking of the proofs of her intimate union with God and of her love for Him, of the constant efforts she was obliged to make, though in vain, that she might not fall into extasies of love, but be able to attend to her domestic occupations. It was a reciprocal struggle of tenderness, in which Divine Goodness took delight. It was truly beautiful to see how, when this pious woman was engaged in the lowest employments of the house, if her Celestial Spouse presented Himself before her, if she heard the sweetness of that Divine Voice, she became unable to resist the effect of these amorous assaults, but remained immoveable as

statue, wrapt in extasy and out of herself. At other times these transports obliged her to sit down quickly, or to lean against a wall to prevent herself from falling, and thus transported out of her senses, she appeared half dead, and absorbed in God. Sometimes, when she was at table dining, she remained immoveable in the position in which she happened to be, as though struck by lightning, without even moving her eyelids. At this sight her husband, from whom our Lord in His impenetrable designs veiled these favours, and her great virtues, would call her roughly, and when she did not answer, he sometimes felt alarmed lest she had been seized with apoplexy, but, finding the same thing occurring again and again, he knew not what to think of it. When she returned to herself she had a smiling expression on her countenance, as if she had awakened from a peaceful slumber, upon which her husband loaded her with reproaches, saying: "How can you sleep even at table? you are quite stupified with sleep." Her eldest daughter, more intelligent, though not understanding all, saw something further, and said that her mother was praying. But the youngest cried out, "My mother is dead!" for even when the child tried to move her, she gave no sign of life. The same thing happened frequently

when she was reciting the rosary with her family before the altar in her house. They shook her in vain, and as this occurred frequently, her husband reproached her saying: it was a shame to go to sleep even at her prayers, when there were so many hours during the night to sleep.

These extasies and spiritual sweetnesses lasted several years, and she complained of it with a holy liberty to her Divine Spouse. "Leave me quiet, O Lord, go leave me because I must work, I am a mother of a family, go, go!" But all her efforts were in vain, for whilst she struggled thus with the love of God, if the most simple creature came before her, she saw stamped on it the most touching proofs of Divine Goodness of which all nature spoke to her, in a language perfectly known only to souls entirely given up to the love of God, so that in the midst of the distractions, which she endeavoured to procure herself, she was conquered by the ineffable attractions of which she became the victim, and she would fall into an extasy, and thus transported out of herself, was bound more and more in the chains of an all-powerful love. When she went out she was obliged to get a friend, on whom she could rely, to accompany her, not being able to depend on herself, as the song of a bird, the sight of a flower, a slight breeze were more

an sufficient to make her become all rapt in God. When these extasies happened in public places, she was much troubled, through feeling of humility as well as of charity to her neighbour, for some persons spoke of them in a very favourable manner, others quite the contrary. She experienced great grief on this account, because God was offended: therefore, when out of doors, she tried to extinguish and to moderate the ardent flames of her heart, but in vain, they were too powerful for her to repress them. Her heart was at with such ardent love for her Beloved, when she received Holy Communion, that her soul seemed ready to escape from her body; she could not restrain her transports, so that some present wondered greatly; some admired this pious woman's fervour, and waited for her outside the church, to recommend themselves to her prayers, whilst others thought her possessed, an enthusiast, a hypocrite; therefore as soon as she had finished her thanksgiving, she would cast a modest glance round the Church, to see if she was observed, and seizing a favourable opportunity, would hasten home, timid and full of confusion.

To avoid attracting attention, she was obliged to go to Communion sometimes in one church, sometimes in another. But her celestial Spouse reproved her for this, bidding

her to make no account of the vain words of men, since He Himself assisted her, and she was in nowise responsible for the failings against charity, committed by others, and telling her that she must return to the church of our Lady of Piety, which she had previously frequented. She punctually obeyed the orders of God, who permitted for the exercise of her patience, not only that her conduct should be again the subject of criticism, but that she should receive great insults; these were carried so far that the communion cloth was snatched from her hands, to oblige her to leave the Church, and one day, when she went up to the rails to receive Holy Communion with others, a priest passed her over without communicating her.\*

"I was myself witness," says a person who was in her confidence, "of what I have related regarding her extasies and transports of love, which occurred particularly when we were making the Stations of the Seven Churches, together with Cardinal Pedicini then prelate. Sometimes beginning, as was her custom, at the Chapel of the Crucifix, in the Church of St. Paul, beyond the walls, saw her all rapt in God, immediately after

\* A priest in another church communicated her with an unconsecrated Host, which she immediately perceived by the taste.



having received the Body of our Lord; I saw her, in other churches of the holy pilgrimage, remain quite immoveable and out of herself inapture, so that when it was necessary to continue our way, I mentally imposed an obedience on her; at the imperious voice of this virtue, she came out of her extasy, and immediately interrupted the heavenly communications, in which were usually revealed to her the most hidden secrets of the Church, and of persons for whom she prayed."

To give some idea of how completely she was absorbed and lost in God during these extasies, among many others may be taken the following fact. In 1799, when the French, far from acting as they are now doing in defence of the Holy See, had come to Italy to make it into a republic, it happened one morning, that on account of a false alarm, their troops were hastily assembled on the Piazza Colonna. Fear and tumult soon spread through the square, and in the neighbouring streets, and the people were thrown into such consternation that all the shops and houses were hastily closed. The noise of many drums resounded in the Church of our Lady of Piety, situated in the square, and in a moment all sought to hasten home, and no one remained in the Church but Anna Maria. The Sacristan, seeing that all had gone out, except her,

and that she was immoveable, giving no sign of having heard anything, came to shut up the Church and close the door. After some time the servant of God started up, surprised to find herself alone, having no knowledge of what had happened, and fearing that those at home would be in trouble on her account, whilst the square was still full of French troops, she did not hesitate to pass through the midst of them and succeeded in doing so, without being molested in any way. Such were the gifts on which we expect the Holy See will one day pass judgment; such were the sensible graces with which Anna Maria was favoured as soon as she had responded to the voice of God, calling her to repentance and to a holy life. She then found herself, as others do, who begin to give themselves to the acquisition of perfection, in the position of those to whom St. Paul speaks when he says, "I gave you milk to drink and not yet solid food." She understood it, and knew that without the Cross it is impossible to follow securely the traces of the Divine Master. already more than once, she had heard resound in her heart, the invitations of her Divine Spouse to the way of the Cross.

Very often whilst meditating on the life and sufferings of her Beloved, the thought how far her own life was from the perfection

and crosses of this admirable model, would make her shed tears. She feared to fall into illusion, and begged our Lord to make her walk by the way He had walked, the way of suffering. But in this the goodness of God would yet spare her, on account of her weakness. It was necessary that she should learn by her own experience, the importance of the lesson which was given her with so much love: "Souls," the good Master said to her, "should humble themselves and not be so confident when they are in a state of fervour; the soul in this state is ever ready to make promises, but when the time of dryness comes, it becomes timid and fearful and advances no further. Every one should in the beginning, say: 'O my God, Thou who art great, Thou who art all-powerful, do with Thy servant what shall seem good to Thee; provided only that she accomplish Thy will; I desire to suffer that which Thou wilt I should suffer, but remember that I am good for nothing.' Souls should remember that My beloved Peter made his promise in a moment of great fervour, and then when the time of trial came, he forgot My love. Remember what I have told thee, men are like a weather-cock, and if My grace did not keep them, they would be moved by every wind." But the crosses and the contempt which the

humble servant of God asked for were not refused, when the time for them was come. We shall see this more particularly in what follows.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### NEW TRIALS.

“I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake.”—Acts. ix. 16.

When Anna Maria had entirely given herself to God, when she had irrevocably entered on the way of perfection, and grace was decisively triumphant in her, she began to taste without delay the sanctifying bitterness of the christian life. “Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.” Tobias xii, 1. Unlike those souls who willingly follow Jesus Christ to Mount Thabor, but who fear Calvary and reject the cross, she continually sighed after sufferings and drew an invincible energy from this source of living water, this drink of the strong; she ceased not to accept with gratitude, and to desire with ardour this mark of resemblance to her Beloved. She found in

deed that the yoke of the Lord is sweet and His burden light; but although suffering is the food of the elect, the repugnances of nature often make it hard to bear, even for the most courageous. More than once Our Lord deigned to say to her to encourage her, "Remember that if a soul seeks to fly from a cross, which I have given her, for her advantage and her good, then I load her with a more heavy one. How is it My daughter, thou didst so much desire sufferings and then thou dost allow thyself to be oppressed with sadness? But thou knowest it, thou must suffer to the end."

In fact to the end of her life, from the day on which Our Lord judged her worthy of this favour, until that on which He deigned to call her to her reward, she suffered constantly, both in soul and body, though her sufferings were for the most part hidden from the eyes of men. In her youth she had enjoyed excellent health, to which her happy and amiable character contributed; but little by little her good health departed. Various natural causes had much to do with this; nevertheless, it cannot be denied that she owed above all, to her great love for her Sovereign Good, the happiness of suffering as she did, almost without interruption, particu-

larly when she was obtaining from God some especial favour for souls. And thus were verified in her that promise made by a love which the spirit of the world is so far from understanding: "Thy life is a long martyrdom!"

Her whole body was afflicted with pains which kept her, for more than thirty years, a continual victim of the cross of her Saviour rendering her life a holocaust, which, by her patience and resignation, became most meritorious; we shall see this more in detail when we speak of her virtue of mortification. It is sufficient to say here, that she had continual pain in her head, the intensity of which was greatly increased on Fridays; pain in the eyes and ears, sometimes most violent pain in her legs and hands, in which the mysterious action of Our Lord was made known in a most visible manner; attacks of the gout, and other infirmities; and thus, showing her likeness to Jesus, might be applied to her those words of the prophet, foretelling His infinite sufferings, "From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no health in Him." We shall see, also, how long and severely she was tried in her domestic life, from her straitened circumstances, or rather from the continual want, in which it pleased God to keep her. We shall

ee, how patiently she bore this cross, not liberating herself from it by means which circumstances offered her, but which she considered contrary to the designs of Providence. We shall see, what she must have suffered in the bosom of her family from the defects of character of those around her, or from the circumstances and needs of the times. She bore all with constancy, and amidst all her suffering she was always seen practising the lesson, which she had received from Our Lord: "The true soldier is not recognized in time of peace, when he is in repose and respected by all around him, every one may thus act the soldier; but when he stands upon the watch; when food, drink, and sleep, are wanting to him; when he fights faithfully for his sovereign, from whom alone he expects his reward, then is the true warrior known." But above all, she showed how truly worthy she was of the peculiar graces with which Our Lord had enriched her, by the manner in which she bore the anguish of the interior abandonment, which succeeded to the sensible sweetnesses of the early times of her conversion. "As one who has been very rich," says the witness we have quoted above, "and falls into poverty, feels it so much the more, the greater the opulence from which he has fallen, so Anna Maria must have felt the change

from the delights of sensible graces, to the bitterness of the feeling of abandonment of soul and subtraction of these same graces. A soul which has felt this trial, will understand what we mean. The soul, which is entirely consecrated to God, will know also that none can long walk in the perfect way of love, without drinking of this chalice. Anna Maria had then no sooner acquired strength to resist temptations to discouragement, than she was subjected to this trial, so loving on the part of God, but so dangerous for the presumption of such as secretly seek themselves in the acts which seem to tend only to God. She passed through this state of anguish, of which we have the record in these words: "From the delicious courts in which she had, for several years, enjoyed the most signal favours of her God, she was driven into a dark prison and loaded with chains. She passed from the garden of delights, where she had enjoyed the sweetest perfumes, to a place infected with a disgusting stench. She recollected, with tears and sighs, the time past, when the Divine Spouse loaded her with the favours of an especial love; but this was over for her, and oppressed as under the weight of a heavy and hard slavery, she endured an intolerable aridity of soul; she appeared to herself as if living, or rather con-



inually dying without ceasing to live, in a corner of hell. She was never, it is true, deprived of those celestial colloquies and divine lights, which she had had at first; but in this profound desolation of spirit, as she no longer experienced that expansion of love, which had previously transported her, she was far from finding in them relief in her pain. Like the thirsty stag, she vainly sought in the paths of the arid desert, the fountain of this desired love. Her Divine Spouse left her, indeed, the lights she was accustomed to receive from Him; but only to prove her and to make her merit more. Just as the night of day, so sweet and consoling to one who beholds once more the charms of nature, becomes to the prisoner only a fresh pain discovering to him anew his real position, the horrors of his abode, the bolts, and bars, and the chains, with which he is loaded, so that night is preferable to him, as then he does not see his evils, though they still surround him; in her sorrowful love, so was it to the end, with this servant of God, with regard to these spiritual lights.\* She had made herself the voluntary slave of her heavenly Spouse and of her neighbour, and the pains

\* These are the words in which Anna Maria herself explained the state of her soul.

and prolonged torments, which she had to suffer in this martyrdom of love, cannot be described. They were so great, that, if from time to time, Our Lord had not come to her aid, it would have been impossible, as she herself asserted, to have endured such torture; and yet this martyrdom went on increasing from day to day until her death. If to these we add all she suffered from violent temptations to hatred of God, from temptation to doubts against faith, from torments internal and external, inflicted by the enemy of souls from the persecutions and calumnies of men, we shall see that in her, in all its rigour, was accomplished that decree of the justice, and at the same time of the love of God for man: "*Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam quotidie et sequatur me.*" If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me, (Luke ix. 23.) In this way did Our Lord reward, in this life, the love and fidelity of His servant. Carnal souls will hardly understand this conduct of Divine Wisdom, but one who has tasted, but for a single day the delights to be found in humiliation and crosses, will find no difficulty in this adorable mystery. Much less will it be a stumbling block to souls entirely given to God; although through their pride, it too often proves one to

worldly persons, for, we must not forget that the wisdom of the flesh is the enemy of God; neither wills nor can will, to use the language of the apostle, to submit its pride to the wisdom of the Lord, "*Sapientia carnis inimica est Deo; legi enim Dei non est subiecta, nec enim potest.*" Rom. viii. 7. Now in the things of God "The prudence of the flesh is death, but the prudence of the spirit is life and peace." "*Prudentia carnis mors est; prudentia autem spiritus vita et pax.*" Rom. viii. 6. And, when the christian soul meditates on these eternal and practical truths, she cannot restrain the transports of her gratitude within her heart, but exclaims in the words of eternal Wisdom Itself, "I give Thee thanks Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." "*Confiteor tibi, Pater, Domine cœli et terræ, quod abscondisti hæc a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis.*" Luke x. 21.

## CHAPTER V.

## DOMESTIC TROUBLES.

## THE EXTREME POVERTY OF HER FAMILY

"Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life-time, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." Luke xvi. 25.

Another mystery which Christian wisdom easily understands, but which human prudence cannot comprehend, is abandonment of ourselves to Providence in want; it is the practice well understood of that counsel of our Lord "Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed. For after all these things do the heathen seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt vi. 31, 32, 33.

Joy in privations is a mystery unknown to the worldly wise; as is also constancy in refusing to avail ourselves of means which are I do not say unlawful, but only contrary to the maxims of perfection.

Now, as we have already said, this is what Anna Maria practised continually to the end

her life. Thus did she faithfully observe at which her Beloved had said to her; Souls, who desire to live a spiritual life, must not always have a compass in their hands, to measure to themselves temporal things. It is thus that the lovers of the world act. They seem to fear that the earth should sink under their feet; but he who trusts Me and loves Me is richer than the kings of the earth; he enjoys both My grace in this world and the everlasting kingdom in the next." The way in which Anna Maria profited by these divine counsels is worthy of admiration, but she took care, at the same time, not to fall into excessive immoderance, through idleness or presumption. Although she submitted, with all belonging to her, to the privations of great want, she neglected nothing, which her position as mother of a family imposed on her, to lessen its rigour by her work. She was in her family that which the holy bishop has so well represented as the perfection of a mother and a wife, saying; A Christian woman is the limb, the support and the companion, for life, of her husband. He is the mother of his children, his comfort in sickness, his consolation in misfortune, the guardian of his house and his greatest treasure. She rejoices when he rejoices, and suffers when he suffers; she possesses in common with him his riches, if he has any;

she aids him by her carefulness, if he is in distress. She provides against and overcomes the evils of poverty, as far as lies in her power; she endures great fatigue and inconvenience in bringing up her children. If misfortunes come and her husband is overwhelmed by his troubles, and those who called themselves his friends, and profited by his friendship in prosperity, leave him in adversity, and his servants also fly from want from their master she, his wife, alone remains at her post, making herself his servant and his support in adversity; it is she who takes care of her husband and wipes away his tears; it is she who binds up his wounds and heals his sores; she will follow him even into chains, if she is allowed to enter his prison, she will share his imprisonment with him, and if she is refused admittance, like a faithful dog who loves his master, she remains at the door.”\*

\* S Asterii Episc. Amasæe, Hom. An liceat dimittere uxorem. Membrum est adiutrix est vitæque socia et communium genitrix liberorem in morbis opitulatrix in calamitate solamen, domus custos, ac bonorum thesaurus. Eodem dolet, eodem gaudet; communes si quæ sunt, possidet opes, rem tenuem et angustam sedulo sustentat, inique paupertatis quantum potest occurrit ac resistit; laborem denique et molestiam educandis liberis propter consortium tuum ingentem subit. Si calamitas incidit, ille malis obrutus latet, amici qui censebatur, amicitiam felicitate metientes, rebus adversis sese subducunt; servi simul et dominum et

Such was Anna Maria to her husband and her children, and in this manner she fulfilled every particular, after her happy conversion, her duties as a daughter, as a wife, and as a mother; but she did this within the limits which her position in life traced out for her. She would never employ the supernatural gifts of God to procure for herself temporal advantages, nor to provide for the necessities of her family. She accepted alms from the rich; but only like other poor people, and refused, constantly and firmly, all that went beyond this. It often happened that illustrious persons, attracted by her reputation for virtue, desired by means of pecuniary benefits, to make her acquaintance, but she would never receive any from them; and when again others after having received signal graces, which they believed they owed to her prayers, desired to show their gratitude by similar means, she was equally firm in her refusal of their gifts and favours. "I do not serve God for interest," she said; "thank our Lord, our lady, or such and such a saint," and she

*misericordias fugiunt. Sola adhæret uxor ægræ partis  
membrum, et in malis serva ac ministra; hæc virum  
trahit, hæc lacrymas abstergit, hæc plagis ac verberibus  
sedetur hæc in carcerem usque comitatur, et si quis  
ingredi permiserit, libenter una cum eo concluditur,  
et id prohibetur, sicut familiaris hero catellus circa  
nocturnam carceris manet.*

could never be induced to do any thing but repeat the words which the great St. Augustine puts in the mouth of the angel speaking to Tobias, "He who has sent me to you is very rich; but He wills that I give you gratuitously, that which He has gratuitously given me. Do not give honour to me by your gratitude, for that which you have received comes not from my power; bless God, acknowledge that you are indebted to Him for everything, glorify Him, since it is He who has done you every good." At other times she said, when people urged her to profit by this, certainly, lawful means mitigating the sufferings of her family, "Men are like weathercocks, they change with every wind; but he who hopes in the Lord shall never be confounded." Animated by a sense of the greatness of God and of the plentifulness of His gifts to souls, who are entirely given to Him, she refused gifts offered to her by persons, who bore her the most constant and generous affection.\* She did this particular

\* In times like ours in which ambition to rise from the condition in which they are born, carries people to such fatal excesses, it was a proof of great wisdom in Anna Maria, not in any way to allow this desire in her children. With the help of persons who desired to serve her and who could easily have done it, they might have been raised above their condition in life, but she would never consent.



with the Duchess of Lucca, Maria Louisa of Bourbon, Queen of Etruria, who loved her as a mother. The Duchess frequently complained that her humble friend had never asked her for any thing, and opening the case in which she kept her money she said to her: "Take, take my Nanny what thou wilt." And Anna Maria smiling, replied to her, with the same simplicity, "What a little foolish one you are! I serve a much richer Lord, I trust in Him, and I have a firm hope that each day He will assist me."\* These were the lessons she taught her own family, animating them to trust in God, amidst the greatest and hardest necessities. She urged them constantly to recur in all their wants even for those regarding corporal life, to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and in a particular manner to that of St. Philomena, for whom she had a great devotion. At the hour of death, she left also this celebrated Wonderworker as the guardian and protector of her poor family. These acts of abandonment, in a matter so painful to the heart of a loving

\* She experienced in a marked manner the happy effect of this perfect confidence in God, at the time of her last sickness. Our Lord had promised her that he should receive at that hour, pecuniary aid from friends at a distance, which happened. The Count Litta specially sent her help from Milan.

mother, like Anna Maria, must, certainly, have been very meritorious before God. Sometimes her heart was so torn with anguish and so full of bitterness on these subjects that she merited to receive sensible consolations from Our Lord. These consolations were greater even than the anguish which maternal love caused her amid trouble, arose from the assurance that she and all belonging to her would be protected by our Lord. This assurance had been given her in these words by her Divine Spouse: "I will save them because they are of thy blood; because they are poor, and the poor are My friends." In order to perfect her more and more in the way of abandonment, our Lord seemed to delight in making her live from day to day, like the birds of the air, and she powerfully seconded His grace, labouring with all her strength, to gain by the sweat of her brow, daily bread for herself and her family; and when her labour was not sufficient to procure what was strictly necessary, she accepted the alms of others with as much gratitude and humility, as she had shown constancy and dignity in refusing on other occasions. Her family was a numerous one and her husband's wages very small; great care and activity were necessary for her, as mother of a family, to supply what was needful in ordinary times; but in the

extreme misery, which the foundation of the Roman Republic in 1798 brought upon the people, we may imagine what she must have done and suffered to merit from God the aid, which He promises to faith and labour, but which He refuses to presumption and sloth. Her husband no longer received his salary at the prince's house, and she resolved to take, from her night's rest, the time for work, which she occupied during the day in domestic duties. But her earnings, though she deprived herself of bread and sleep, obtained little more than sufficient to prevent her family from dying of hunger. and she determined to do something still more painful. A public distribution of bread was made at the same time to the poor; but as the number of sufferers was very great, it was necessary to pass long hours waiting in the crowd, which hastened eagerly to the places where distribution was made. Although ill and wearied with her labours, Anna Maria determined to present herself, and did so, as long as the extreme distress lasted. This was indeed a time of severe poverty; but at various other times of her life, she had need of all the faith in God with which she was animated, to bear the heavy cross which the wants of her family was to her. On such occasions, when neither work nor other human

means were sufficient to relieve them, she had recourse to prayer; she began some special devotions and made them with such fervour, that she never finished them without having been heard. "Our Lord," says a witness of these great favours, "touched the heart of persons at a great distance, who had known her; and the servant of God was often assisted, by those from whom she could not have thought of expecting help." Cardinal Pedicini who knew her up to the time of her death came to her, more than once, unexpectedly, and said to her: "you have not told me that you are in pressing need; but I felt myself strongly urged to seek aid for you, and I have found it." The same thing happened to other persons, among whom we may mention the Countess d'Andezzeno of Turin, General Michaud, aide-de-camp of the Emperor of Russia, and others. One day Anna Maria being in great distress from want, determined to go to recommend herself to God, in the Church of St. Paul without the walls, and after communion at the Chapel of the most holy Crucifix, praying earnestly to her celestial Spouse, she heard Him say, "Go home, you will find providence there." Scarcely had she reached home when she received a letter from Florence, containing a small bill of exchange from the Marquis Carlo Bandi

though she had written nothing to him concerning the position in which she was. In fine, her faith in God was so great, that, if an alms was given her greater than the urgent need of the moment required, she distributed it to the poor families who had recourse to her in their necessities. All reflections are useless in the face of such examples and so much virtue.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### HER APPARENTLY COMMON LIFE.

"All the beauty of the King's daughter is within."—  
Psalm xliv. 14.

From what we have seen already it appears, clearly, that the great virtue and exalted perfection of Anna Maria must have been hidden from the eyes of the world, under the appearance of a common life. What we are going now to say will prove the exact fidelity of this humble soul in corresponding to the designs of God over her. These designs were revealed to her, more than once, in a very consoling and admirable manner. She believed that she had an intimate knowledge of them, communicated to her, in the depths

of her heart, by means of our Blessed Lady. "Know," it was said to her, "that thou shalt have in this life one good day, to a hundred bad, because thou must resemble My Son. Now in this life all His dear ones have suffered much, and done violence to themselves; they have embraced the sharpest penances, and as for thee, thou must, in an especial manner, endeavour to follow His will, thy life being quite a peculiar one. People will see the possibility, one day, of serving God in every state, in every condition, without so much external penance, but by striving manfully to overcome their own passions, and conforming themselves to the will of God. It is a far greater thing to renounce our own will and to submit completely to that of God, than to do the greatest penances." A life apparently common, which keeps the great perfection of the soul hidden, was the character which Anna Maria therefore delighted to impress on all her actions, persuaded as she was of the truth of these sublime lessons and of another which her Divine Spouse gave her in these words: "Virtue does not consist in penance only, but also in a true mortification of your own will, and in works done in a manner hidden from the eyes of all, as far as possible. The true servant of God ought to be glad to know that her works are known only to her Heavenly

Father.....In a word," He added, (speaking of her and of another soul whom she directed in the ways of God) "as long as you live in the world, you must accustom yourselves to receive good and evil, to be comforted and to suffer, always happy and content. Seek not indulgence for your body, because you ought to imitate Me, and think that I am ever present with you, that I see all your actions; therefore be good, patient and humble, and I will bless you."

Happy the souls to whom Our Lord gives the grace, to follow faithfully such lessons in the secrecy of a life hidden in God, in the secrecy of a life, the delights and the greatness of which, the world is not capable of understanding. Now such was Anna Maria's life. As a daughter she fulfilled her duties with a perfection, which was so much the greater, as with regard to her parents, God had given her a very heavy cross. Her father after having squandered all his goods and reduced his daughter to poverty, treated her with harshness and injustice. He was a man of a violent and capricious temper, and more than once, he illtreated her without any reason. Anna Maria, in return for this, showed only patience, sweetness and filial piety, carried to a high degree, particularly after she had consecrated herself entirely to the service of God. Her

father, towards the end of his life, was attacked with a cutaneous illness which rendered him disgusting, and he needed cares, which his daughter's tenderness made precious and dear to him. She combed, washed and dressed his sores with a loving patience, which the heart of a christian daughter alone could inspire. So with her aged mother, although she had less to suffer, she was obliged to exercise in great perfection the duties which God imposes on us towards parents, which the natural feelings of the heart dictate to us, it is true, but which the spirit of faith and charity teach us to practise with much greater abnegation of self, and in a far more sublime manner. In the accomplishment of her duties as a wife, the opportunities were equally great of practising, in the secret of her heart, the perfection of the hidden life to which God called her; without speaking of the real and constant cross, which the matrimonial state laid upon her, she often found, in her husband's character, subject for the exercise of christian patience, with which to nourish herself. She had a soul full of delicate and elevated feeling, with a very high sense of propriety. Her husband on the contrary, although at the bottom his sentiments were good, and he was a right-minded man, was far from equalling her in these respects; his conversation and manners were



rough and uncultivated, like those of an uneducated person, and he was deficient in those feelings of propriety and refinement, with which chosen souls are gifted. He never indeed illtreated his wife, but he was exacting with her in little things, in which Anna Maria yielded to him, with the humility and amiability which suited her position. She knew the extent of the duties of her state of life, and fulfilled them. In all the circumstances of her life, in her days of sorrow, as in her happiest days, her husband found her ever ready to render him even the most minute services.\*

Hence during about fifty years that their union lasted, this angel of sweetness succeeded by her patience, in avoiding every thing which might have disturbed their constant harmony, and thus by her meekness and her example, she brought her husband to a much better manner of life. In a word she was, in the spirit of penance, as perfect as a wife, as she was as a daughter and as a mother. The virtues, which she exercised in this last, were such as might be expected in a soul so high in

\* Thus in spite of her infirmities, which made it very painful for her to stoop, the holy woman herself tied her husband's shoes and did many other things for him which he would have spared her, if he had been of a less exacting character.

sanctity as hers. She had never to reproach herself with regard to her children, with the least negligence in the affectionate care which was due to them, and which she took both of their souls and their bodies. She brought them up and tended them in their infancy most tenderly and diligently, and provided for them to the utmost of her power, until she had placed them in situations, in which they could maintain themselves by their own work. With regard to their souls her care was, if possible, still greater and more vigilant. Besides the religious principles which she ever inculcated on them, from their infancy, she took the utmost care to remove from them, both within and without the house, every occasion of scandal. The most perfect order, moral as well as material, reigned in her poor little cottage, where neatness and cleanliness, as well as good manners, were observed. The day was begun by prayers; after which she sent her boys to their shops and the girls to school. In the evening she said the rosary with them and other prayers, before their frugal supper. Her house was very small, yet, however young her children were, they slept apart, the boys' beds separated from the girls' by mats and hangings, and she watched over them even at night. Her own and her husband's beds were in separate rooms. When she went to

visit the seven churches, or to any other place at a long distance, she left them in the charge of her aged mother, who was sufficiently careful and prudent for that; as also when she went to her devotions in the morning, although she generally returned in time to attend to her children. On holidays of obligation she sent them punctually to Catechism, and took them to Benediction and Rosary or to hear some preacher.\* In her house those kinds of public amusements of which the poor people of Rome are so fond, such as theatres, &c. were never spoken of. But she was prudent with her children, and when public amusements† were going on, she would take them for a walk and procure them some little refreshment, after having visited some church. When they were instructed for confession, she took care that they should go frequently to this sacrament; she had them carefully instructed for confirmation, and when they were to make their first Communion, endeavoured to have them well prepared to receive so great a

\* It was so evident she would take them to mass, that the author has not considered it necessary to mention it; in a Catholic country it would never be doubted that a good mother would do so.

† The public amusements spoken of here are the carnival, &c. If she had lived in England, what care would she not have taken to preserve her children from the harm they might learn, or get into, at fairs.

sacrament, by retreat and spiritual exercises. She continually inculcated christian maxims and warned them to fly from bad companions. She endeavoured also to place them under masters, who had the fear of God; and from time to time, she would go to enquire about their moral conduct.

When her eldest son was grown up, having well learned his trade, he asked his father's and mother's permission to marry; and his good mother, after having made enquiries as to the character of the young person, gave her consent together with her husband. After some time the other son manifested the same wish, and his father and mother, after taking the like precautions, acted in the same way. Her eldest daughter also wishing to marry, a well-conducted and pious young man presented himself, but as her daughter did not like him, Anna Maria would not urge her, and she married one who pleased her better. In all these cases, before the marriage took place she would have the young people meet, that they might know each other better, but always in the presence of their parents. Her good and christian reasons were these: since the holy tie of matrimony is indissoluble, it should be engaged in with prudent caution; but at the same time she would not allow any of her children to delay the projected marriage, with-

out good reasons, as is often done with much inconvenience and scandal. After the celebration of the marriage of her children, the servant of God kept them in her house some time to instruct them in the difficult duties of their state ; and when they left her she would invite them, from time to time, to her house to dine, now one now another, to confirm them in christian maxims and moral conduct. For the rest, this good mother neglected nothing in her power to make them practise at home and abroad the duties of honest—that is christian people ; since without the careful practice of the duties of faith and evangelical morality, natural propriety is a very fragile and incomplete thing. If all her children did not correspond fully in every thing to her care, this was another kind of cross which Our Lord sent her to prove her in every way, but which she did not bring on herself by her fault or negligence. Since she was destined by God to become a model of the most perfect virtue in the married state, she must, according to the designs of God, fulfil them to the utmost, and suffer all the afflictions to which, alas ! the most holy and loving mothers are subject. Both her son-in-law and her daughter-in-law were a cause of suffering to her, as well as another person who lodged in her house, and she was called to practise, in all their perfection, the

loving instructions which she received from our Lord. "The evil spirit," (said He to her in one of those delicious communications, with which He favoured her,) "is a spirit of contradiction. Whoever is under his dominion does not live in peace day or night; My spirit, on the contrary, is a spirit of love and peace yielding to all in everything, which is not sinful. To condescend to the weaknesses of men for the sake of peace in families, is a particular grace, which I do not grant to all." This gift of internal and external peace amidst contradictions and crosses, was the veil of which grace made use, to cover under a common appearance the perfection of this holy life. Anna Maria deeply felt the value of it, when her Divine Master made her understand it in these words: "Know that he who enjoys peace possesses every thing. To attain this great blessing souls do sharp penance." It is not therefore astonishing that she should have made great efforts to attain this valuable peace nor that the enemy should have done his utmost to rob her of it. More than once our Lord came to her aid, giving her such precious interior warnings as these: "Thou art agitated; repress this natural feeling, live in peace and put the world under thy feet." And again, "Oh, ungrateful daughter! why dost thou not remember the many and beautiful

Instructions I have given thee? Thou allowest thyself to be overcome by sadness and want of confidence; dost thou not remember then that thy Beloved stands with open arms to receive thee?" The same Divine Wisdom, when teaching her, for another soul, the secret of constancy in that peace, which the world knows not of, said to her: "A humble and prudent man says, however bad the circumstances may be in which he finds himself: 'I have deserved it, this is nothing.' He never disquiets himself, as that soul does. I have many times told thee, and repeated it again and again, that to acquire My peace and My tranquillity, it is necessary to renounce your own judgment, to bow down your own head, and to fill yourself with My holy humility." And it was by practising in the depths of her heart so many and such eminent virtues, that this pious woman hid from the world the secret of her perfection. It is on this account we justly apply to her, as we have already done, the words of holy Scripture: "All the glory of this daughter of the king is hidden in the depths of her heart."

## CHAPTER VII.

THE INFLUENCE WHICH ONE SO HUMBLE  
HAD OVER THE PUBLIC EVENTS OF HER  
TIME.

“The continual prayer of a just man availeth much.”  
James v. 16.

No one can doubt but that this life, so common in appearance, was most glorious before God. What we have now to add will prove it still more clearly.

It often happens in the political life of nations as in the life of individuals, that the humble prayers of a soul, unknown to all, has drawn down signal graces, the effects of which are known to the world, whilst their source remains hidden from almost all eyes. And so it was, (as we shall see still better when the Church has passed her judgment on this subject), in the case of Anna Maria, in regard to several great events of her time. It was not only that such events were revealed to her but her happy influence over those events was like that which the saints have, on other occasions, exercised by their prayers. From among many examples we will take the following, and we give it, the rather, because it has a peculiar



interest in the present political state of Rome, showing what she had to suffer, like the B. Catherine of Sienna her fellow citizen, to keep back the vengeance of God, ready to fall upon Rome, in leaving it the prey to political revolutions. This is the account which has been given us of it. "All the secret manœuvres and the hidden assemblies of the revolutionists appeared to her in a most distinct manner, she saw also their vast and cruel plans. Then the ardent charity with which she was filled showed itself more generous than ever, and made her present herself before her Divine Spouse, with fervent and continual supplications, offering herself as a victim to His good pleasure. Her prayers to avert God's anger, as well as for the conversion of these ungrateful sons of humanity, were so persevering and fervent, that from the first year she obtained from God a special promise in favour of Rome. She obtained that the impious designs of these conspirators should not prevail, there, in her time; that, although God would leave them free liberty to contrive their plots, every thread of them should be broken at the moment of execution, by a single blow; and that she must prepare herself to satisfy divine justice, in return for so great a favour. In fact every time that conspiracies, which were formed, came to nought, the servant of God was either

seized with some dangerous illness or became the object of persecution, fell into great want, or had to suffer from calumnies and the most cruel interior desolation ; and when she went sorrowfully, to alleviate her pain in the bosom of her Saviour, her Good Master showed her that the cause of so much suffering was the reciprocal promise, made between Himself and His humble servant. She was not therefore discouraged ; on the contrary, seeing in other circumstances new designs were being formed, that great effusion of blood was threatened, particularly of priests and high dignitaries of the Church, she reminded her Beloved of the promise she had received from Him, she again began her prayers, and what we have related happened again ; and this all the time that she lived. How many prayers did she offer for the sovereign Pontiff, and for the highest in dignity among the other ecclesiastics ! What graces does not the Church owe to the prayers and the penances of this servant of God ! How much does Rome in particular owe to her. And this was the fruit of charity, nourished in the heart of this humble woman, by the love of suffering and the cross of Jesus Christ. To love and to suffer!—such has ever been the life of the blessed disciples of Him Who, born in the poverty of Bethlehem, died on Calvary in the midst of most cruel sufferings. So

ought we ever to repeat, with a feeling of ineffable consolation in trials, what was said by a holy Pontiff: "What then is the tribulation of a moment since it procures glory? What we look upon as adversity is but the foundation of happiness."\* To pray and to suffer, such will ever be the quickest and surest means of doing those great and hidden things in the Church and the world, the secret of which will be revealed in the day of the eternal judgments of God. We have given a very distinct proof of it, and we may be allowed to offer another singularly resembling this of the life of Anna Maria, which occurred in that of St. Catherine of Sienna, with regard to the conspirators of her time. "Catherine saw in spirit the city of Rome (as she herself wrote to Brother Raymond) filled with demons, who excited the people against the Pope. These same devils cried out horribly against the saint† and said: 'Cursed one, it is through thee we are hindered; but infallibly we will make thee die a horrible death.' But the saint, not at all troubled by them, continually

\* St. Hormisdæ papæ ad Episc. orient. orthod. Epist.—Apud Mansi SS. Conc. coll. t. viii.—Quanta est tribulatio, si gloriam parit? Materia prosperorum est, quæ putatur adversitas.

+ The same thing happened more than once to Anna Maria.

prayed to her Celestial Spouse to bring to nought their evil designs and not to permit any insult to His Vicar. Then our Lord spoke to her thus : ‘Let this people, My daughter, in punishment for the blasphemies by which they daily offend Me, fall into this sin, so that they may deserve to be exterminated from the face of the earth, since My justice cannot endure them any longer.’ But the humble virgin, ever more inflamed with zeal and charity, replied : ‘O most clement Lord ! Thou seest the Church, Thy Spouse redeemed with the price of Thy Blood, insulted and persecuted throughout almost the whole world ; Thou knowest how few come to her aid ; Thou knowest moreover that the enemies of Thy Church *desire the death of Thy Vicar*. If then Thou permittest this wickedness in the people, Thy own judgment will bring about a great disaster in the Church and throughout Christendom. Let Thine angels be appeased, then, O Lord, and do not abandon souls which have cost Thee so dear. And if it may not be otherwise, in order that Thy justice may be satisfied, do not despise the prayers and the offerings of Thy servant. I willingly consent to drink the chalice of suffering and death for the honour of Thy name and of Thy Church, as I have always desired from the moment I gave Thee my love and my heart

It pleased the Lord to grant her this grace ; but He willed that she should pay the price of it to the utmost, permitting the evil spirits to torment her with cruel sufferings, which lasted to the end of her life ; but the agitation of the people ceased from that time. The sufferings which the pious virgin, thus become a victim of charity, endured generously in her weak body were such that she was reduced to skin and bone ; and yet, animated as she was by an interior spirit, she walked, prayed and worked, looking like a walking skeleton. Those who were about her saw upon her the marks of the blows which the devils had given her ; and the saint herself wrote of it to Brother Raymond, adding, that while beating her they said : ‘ Cursed one, who always and everywhere hast persecuted us up to this day, now the time is come when we will take full vengeance on thee. Thou didst banish us from this city, but we will deprive thee of this corporal life.’ ”\*

We hope that this digression will be pardoned us. It appeared to us important, as showing how the mysterious chain of causes, which most directly influence human events, is often hidden from the eyes of human prudence. At the same time it will be seen how Divine

\* Vita di S. Caterina di Siena raccolta ecc. da Paolo Frigerio, Romano, prete della congregazione dell'Oratorio. In 4 Roma. Mascordi 1656, p. 167.

Wisdom ever confounds the wisdom of the wise and the prudence of the prudent. We ought also hence to conclude how much, not only souls consecrated to public prayer in the Church, but even the humblest among the faithful, ought to be earnest in raising their hearts and their hands to heaven, in times of general calamity. We may see here also a very clear proof of the great truth which the Fathers teach, saying with the Church, faithful to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, "Be not excessively saddened by adversity, but on the contrary have faith in the true words of Him Who says to you : ' Without me you can do nothing : ' and again, ' It is not the will of man which triumphs, but the mercy of God, ' and ' All that the Lord has willed in heaven and on earth, that has He done, ' and ' All that I will is effected, ' and again, ' A king is not saved by the power of his strength... It is not more difficult for the Lord to save by means of a small number than by a multitude, ' and, ' He who shall glorify My name shall be glorified by me; but those who despise me fall into disgrace. ' Then rejecting the suggestions of the flesh, of which it is said: ' The Lord confounds the counsels of the powerful; but the divine decrees shall remain for ever, ' follow the teaching which God has designed to leave to men by means of the prophets :

'Put your trust in the Lord and He will nourish you, and His mercy shall be about those who hope in Him.' " \*

We may draw hence powerful motives to hope against every hope, even in the greatest calamities, thence to penetrate ourselves with this beautiful thought of a holy Pope: "It is by the high counsel of God, that when His holy ones are oppressed by the persecutions of their enemies, and turn to Him with continual supplications for their deliverance, He delays to hear them, that their merit may be increased by their sufferings." †

Epist. Supi apud Ferrariam Senonum abbatis. Epist. xxxiii. Ad Carolum regem.—Nolite igitur casu contrario nimis contristari, sed potius credite veridicis verbis ejus: Sine me nihil potestis facere: et: non est volentis, sed miserentis Dei, et, omnia quæcumque voluit Dominus fecit in cœlo et in terra; et: omnis voluntas mea fiet, et: non salvatur rex per multam virtutem, et: non est Domino salvare difficile in multitudine, vel in paucis, et: qui glorificat me, glorificabo eum, qui autem contemnunt me, erunt ignobiles. Et spreto carnalium consilio, de quibus dicitur: Dominus dissipat consilia gentium etc; consilium autem Domini eternum manet; acquiescite, consilio, quod per prophetam ipse dignatur dare mortalibus: Jacta cogitatum tuum in Deum, et ipse te enutriet, et sperantes in Domino misericordia circumdabit.

+ Alto consilio, omnipotens Deus cum sancti ejus adversariorum persecutionibus comprimuntur, cumque assiduis ut liberentur interpellationibus clamant, differre solet voces petentium, ut merita patientium crescant.—S. Greg. Magni. Moral. lib xx. c. 31.

Now we must say that under these various points of view Anna Maria's prayer was so perfect that it merited to obtain, for herself and for others, numerous and signal favours. Among these we may place one of which we have already spoken, the knowledge which she had of future and distant events. We will give but one example of this here ; the supernatural lights she received relative to the Cardinal Pedicini. This Cardinal never went to visit his diocese without first consulting the servant of God, who immediately made known to him the difficulties he would meet with, and the results which would follow. We shall limit ourselves for the present to this fact since it sufficiently shows what signal favour God bestowed on one so humble ; and, because also, it belongs not to us to anticipate the judgment of the Church with regard to such graces.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### HER FAITH.

"Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for the evidence of things that appear not." Heb. xi. 1.

A subject not less worthy of our admiration and a practical example for our greater perfec-



tion, is to be found in the details of the virtues practised by Anna Maria in so eminent a degree. We shall not, then, content ourselves with having spoken of them together, as we have hitherto done, but we will now lay before the reader the most remarkable traits of those different virtues, which pious and trustworthy witnesses have furnished us with.

We will begin, as is natural, with the virtue which, according to the apostle, is the true foundation of the life of the Christian: Faith. "The just man lives by faith." Rom. i. 17. Faith, which opens to Jesus the door of our heart, and prepares the way for divine grace to fill it with hope and love.

The perfect abandonment to Divine Providence, in which Anna Maria lived and died is sufficient to prove how great was her spirit of faith in what regards the temporal concerns of this life. This abandonment was so perfect and so great, that in all justice may be applied to her those words of St. Gregory, speaking of the contempt which the just have for the riches of the world : "seeing that the wicked obtain the glory of the world, she thought only of carrying her good works to perfection; and so much the more did she despise temporal goods, as she saw them filled with evil. She considered how despicable those things must be, which God grants even to the wicked,

since if these things were better than all others He Who has created them would not have given them to His enemies.”\*

This spirit of faith was so lively in all her most common actions, that her life may be considered a continual practice of that rule of perfection, taught by God Himself to the father of believers : “ Walk before Me and be perfect.” Gen. xvii. 1. Hence arose that unalterable peace, that entire conformity to the will of God, of which we have spoken, and which was never disturbed by the most unforeseen and painful events of her life. In addition to what we have already related, a very remarkable instance of this was seen in her conduct with regard to her two sons, Alexandre and Camillus, the first of whom was taken up and put in prison, and it was only after three or four days that his innocence was known, and he set at liberty. The other was unexpectedly, and by mistake, enrolled among those soldiers whom Napoleon was raising to form a large army, towards the end of his reign, and thus forced into the service, he was

\* *Conspiciens perversos obtinere terrenam gloriam bona sua opera provehit ad perfectionem ; et tanto altius temporalia despicit, quanto hæc ascendere etiam maliternit. Quam enim sint despicienda considerat, quæ Deus omnipotens etiam perversis prestat. Si enim principaliter magna essent, nequaquam hæc conditor adversariis suis tribueret.—S. Greg. Magni, Mor. lib. xiii. c. 38.*

sent from Rome, in spite of all the efforts which were made to prevent this act of injustice :\* he was taken off without pity, together with the other victims of the ambition and pride of the Emperor, who since he had become the persecutor of the Church, blindly pursued his course. Camillus was thus thrown into the midst of the sanguinary contests, which ended in the most terrible and instructive fall of modern times. God preserved the son of His servant, it is true, from death, and in the end restored him to his mother; but for a long time she, like so many others, suffered from this unexpected injustice and violence. She bore this suffering like the mother of the Machabees and the heroic St. Felicita. God willed it should be thus, and she was silent, hiding her grief and her tears in her own soul,

\* The affectionate mother went to the barracks to see him (before he set out to join the army, into which he had been thus suddenly thrust) but this being refused her, she returned to her house and found there, the person who, she had every reason to suppose, had been the cause of his misfortune, she made great efforts to give no sign of what she felt, remaining indeed sad, but in silence. On entering her room she threw herself before our Lord, to obtain relief in her sorrow, and He was so much pleased, with the violence she had done herself, that He immediately comforted her with an assurance that her son should be restored to her safe and sound, and that he would be among the few who would return from the army, as in fact happened.

she waited courageously and with resignation the day of consolation. Her maternal heart suffered much also on account of the imprisonment of her eldest son, and she was obliged on this sad occasion to exercise very courageously the spirit of faith. It is true, indeed, that his life was not endangered, as was that of her second son in war; but in an imprisonment of this nature, although it only happened from calumny, there is always something of disgrace, very difficult to bear for a person of such refined feelings as Anna Maria.\* In this also she resigned herself, penetrated with the sentiment so well expressed by St. Bernard, "There is no glory so great, no riches so precious, as the sense of justice in a conscience which has no cause for self reproach."† We appeal to the heart of every right feeling mother to judge how great must have been her spirit of faith and of conformity to the will of God, to submit without complaint or murmur to such a humiliation. This spirit of faith fed by charity of which she gave so many proofs, was strengthened also by an exact and enlightened knowledge of the sacred mysteries and doctrines of the Gospel. She had a great

\* She generously forgave the person who had caused her this misfortune.

† Nulla talis gloria, nullæ tantæ divitiæ, quanta justitia in domo conscientiæ justi.—St. Bernard. Abb., Ep. cccxi. ad Hainc. Cancell.

version for any proposition not conformable to the Divine teaching transmitted by the Church, for whose decisions she had the highest veneration.\* Led also by a spirit of lively faith, she had for the Ministers of the altar, particularly for the sovereign Pontiff, the Cardinals, and Bishops, all the religious respect due to their character. So great an esteem and veneration had this virtuous woman for priests, that she would give the poorest priest who might come to see her, the preference in honour before the persons of the highest rank who happened to be present. To our shame be it said, we see priests treated very differently in these our days, not only by the impious, because they do not believe, they merit only our compassion, but by those who call themselves christians and boast of being christians. The transitory and failing goods of this miserable world are the unstable bases of the so-called great and exalted ones of the world, and therefore they treat one another with consideration and respect. But they should remember that the priest is he to whom the power of the keys has been given, to open to them and to put them in possession

\* She had also great respect and devotion for what are called *sacramentalia*, for holy water in particular, of which she made use on every occasion, for herself and those belonging to her.

of immense and eternal goods. They should remember that in the extreme need, in which they will find themselves at the hour of death, the priest is the only one who can comfort and assist them efficaciously in the great passage to eternity. Some of these would think they lowered themselves if they paid respect to a poor priest ; as if he were not the minister of that all-powerful God, at Whose nod the mountains are laid low and the heavens tremble ; of that Eternal Sovereign before Whom all the sovereigns of the earth are but as vases of fragile clay and crowned dust, who at a breath of His will are scattered to the wind ! And whence comes this ? It comes from want of faith ; from a dead faith. Very different from this was the servant of God, and therefore if she heard of any considerable failure in these holy duties, it was a cruel torment to her. In this way was accomplished what our Lord had said to her of what she was to suffer, saying : " Thy life is a long martyrdom of faith. On this account I have told thee, more than once, that I would place thee in the number of the martyrs." The blasphemies which are so frequent and so terrible among the people of the city of Rome, the impious propositions equally frequent, alas ! in these our days, were so many mortal wounds which pierced her heart ; so that penance and prayer could

alone bring her any comfort and consolation. The thought of christian nations separated from Catholic unity by heresy or schism, of those innumerable tribes of infidels who still people the world, inflamed her with immense zeal, while it plunged her into bitter grief. The fervour of her penances, her prayers and her zeal was such, that she merited to have this prayer to the Mother of God revealed to her: "Prostrate at thy most holy feet, O great Queen of Heaven! I venerate thee with the most profound respect, and acknowledge thee to be the Daughter of the Divine Father, Mother of the Divine Word, and Spouse of the Holy Ghost. Thou art the treasurer and dispenser of His mercies. Because thy heart is full of charity, sweetness, and tenderness, we call thee the Mother of Divine pity. Hence in anguish and affliction of spirit, with great confidence I come to thee, most loving Mother, and I pray thee to make me feel how truly thou lovest me, granting me the grace I ask of thee, if it be according to the will of God and for the good of my soul. Turn I pray thee thy most pure eyes on me and on my brethren, and on those especially who have recommended themselves to my prayers. See what a cruel war the devil, the world, and the flesh wage against our souls, and how many perish in it. Remember, O most tender Mo-

ther, that we are all thy children, redeemed by the most precious Blood of thine only Son. Deign earnestly to implore the most holy Trinity to grant me the grace to overcome the devil, the world, and my evil passions; that grace whereby the just are sanctified, sinners converted, heresies destroyed infidels enlightened, and Jews converted. Ask, O most loving Mother, this grace, through the infinite goodness of the Most High God, through the merits of thy Most Holy Son, by the milk wherewith thou didst nourish Him, by the solicitude with which thou didst serve Him, by the love wherewith thou didst love Him, by the tears thou didst shed and by the grief thou sufferedst in His most holy passion. Obtain for me this great gift, that all the world may form one people and one Church, that it may give glory, honour, and thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity and to thee, who art our Mediatrix. May this grace be granted me by the power of the Father, by the wisdom of the Son, and by the virtue of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Pius VII. at the request of Cardinal Pedicini, recognized in his audience of March 6th, 1809, the purity of the zeal which had inspired this prayer, and the fruit which wandering souls might derive from such a prayer for divine mercy being offered for them, and



he granted a certain number of indulgences to those who should have the devotion to recite it. With such dispositions it is easy to judge that the spirit of faith must have abounded in Anna Maria, particularly when she meditated on the divine mysteries, and this was in a remarkable degree evident in her. She had a particular devotion to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, a devotion which continually increased by the practices of piety of the third order to which she belonged.\* Her devotion received a new impetus from a consoling thing which happened to her, and which is related by a witness, of whom mention has already been made. "Being one day," he says, "in our Church of Holy Mary of Victories, and praying before an altar, where there was a picture of the Most Holy Trinity, that soul rapt in God, and out of herself, heard the sweet voice of her Celestial Spouse, who invited her to the adoration of this great mystery, so incomprehensible for us travellers in this world." The lights which she received in this colloquy were such as we may form some idea of, from all that we know of her and of the Divine favours granted to her. Therefore we consider superfluous to say more about the ardent

\* The order of the Most Holy Trinity for the redemption of captives.

devotion which was the effect of it. The painful scenes of the life of our Saviour and of His most holy Mother, the sufferings of the martyrs and of the saints were frequently the subject of her meditations and her tears. That she might be more and more penetrated with them she loved to retire to Churches and pious sanctuaries, far from the crowd : in the cemetery of the hospital of the Holy Spirit, for example, in the chapel of the Crucifix of St. Cecilia in Trastevere, in that of St. Paul beyond the walls, where she generally went barefooted from the city gates to the church, meditating on the sufferings of the Son of God, or of His most holy Mother. There, plunged deeper and deeper in these touching meditations, it often happened that the meaning and the explanation of them were more fully given her by Jesus Himself and by Mary, whose loving benignity delighted to communicate itself to this loving and fervent soul. What shall we say then of the spirit of faith with which she received the most holy sacraments, or which inspired her with gratitude for benefits bestowed on her in other ways ! The thought of her baptism was for her a subject of delight and inexpressible gratitude. The memory of her confirmation reminded her of the strength and courage which she ought to have in her combats against the world.

and against hell. In the sacrament of penance she was penetrated with love and admiration at the thought of the mercy obtained for the world by the Blood of Jesus Christ. She endeavoured to increase in her heart by the holiness of her life, the graces of her state in life, the source of which was opened to her in the sacrament of marriage. But as she gave proof in so many circumstances, it was in the adorable mystery and sacrament of our altars that she tasted a plenitude of happiness and a view of faith which words cannot express. It was the same with the divine sacrifice of the mass, and whenever she was near the sacred species under which the adorable mystery is veiled. Sometimes the obscurity of this august mystery disappeared as it were before her love. Thus, in a visit which she made at the Exposition of the forty hours at St. Andrew of the Valley, our Lord deigned to present Himself to her in the Sacred Host full of light and majesty. And again, another time during Exposition at the Church of St. Mary of Consolation, the Sacred Host appeared to Her shining on a lily, and she heard distinctly these delicious words: "I am the Flower of the Field, and the Lily of the valley, and I am thine!" What grief must she not then have felt when another time she heard the loving voice of her Beloved complaining and

saying to her : " If thou knewest, My daughter, how few there are who visit and console Me ! In the multitude of people whom thou seest in this church, scarcely two souls are truly sincere. The others are as much disposed for the theatre and other senseless pleasures of this world as for the Church. Ah ! if I were to disclose to thee the depths of their hearts thou couldst not bear the stench which issues thence." Such was Anna Maria's spirit of faith, and such the favours she received in reward for it. But such great happiness and such signal graces were not preserved without combats on her part, and without continual temptations from the devil and the world. She had great trials too from men, particularly in the case of those in whose conversion she was greatly interested : but above all, the devil often suggested to her doubts and difficulties against the very essence of faith, which were so strong as at times to make her shed tears. And it was thus that, by a most precious grace, her Divine Master kept her amid so many lights and favours, in a continual diffidence of herself, a secure way of avoiding the rocks on which so many others have been shipwrecked. This continual cross, added to the bitter remembrance of her past life, kept her in the holy way of interior humility so necessary for salvation. And thus she became each

day more and more penetrated with the thought which should have preserved her from falling in her younger days. "The woman who exalts herself in her pride is fallen; the woman who sought the ornaments of beauty has deserved shame and the dishonour of sin."\*

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## CHAPTER IX.

### HER HOPE.

"They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Sion; he shall not be moved for ever that dwelleth in Jerusalem." Psalm cxxiv. 1.

If Anna Maria was humble and generous in her faith, she was no less humble and confident in her hope. Ever distrustful of herself, confidence in God and in the merits of Jesus Christ was her anchor of safety, in the midst of the tempests of this sad life. Continually mindful of the faults of her youth, whilst she looked up with love and confidence to the goodness of God, she considered her own misery and weakness with holy fear and trembling; and she was often heard to sigh out from

\* *Exaltatæ ceciderunt comptæ turpitudinem fœditatemque meruerunt.*—S. Cyprian. lib de hab virgin.

the depths of her heart, "I have sinned, O Lord, have pity on me."

Animated with this feeling of diffidence of herself and of her unworthiness in the sight of God, in spite of the loving confidence with which the favours and graces of which she was the object, and which she could not but recognise in herself, filled her, she never in the hard labour of the perfect life ceased for an instant acting with the most energetic courage, and the greatest perseverance. She knew that all the fruit of this same work, in spite of so many and such striking marks of our Lord's predilections, would have been lost in an instant, if she had been guilty of cowardice or negligence. Hence so many acts of virtue, hence so much self-denial, so many penances and tears. On the other hand, her hope had solely for its object those things, which are alone truly dear to the heart of a Christian. She was one of those souls, who still "retained in this world by the body, are already far from it in desire, who lament the pains of exile which they have to suffer, and whose ardent Charity makes them long for their heavenly country."\* So did she every-

\* *Unus-quisque eorum (the just) adhuc in hoc mundo corpore positus, mente, iam extra mundum fugit, ærumnam exilii quam tolerat, deplorat. et ad sublimem*

where and in everything find new motives for despising the world and renouncing herself, for taking up her cross and following her Saviour in the ways of Calvary to which He led her. Everything in her life, whether within her or without, tended lovingly and solely to the supreme end, in which God has placed the reward and the crown of His Saints. Her eyes, her thoughts, her desires, were centred there, and each day her impatient ardour made her say with the prophet: "Wo is me that my sojourning is prolonged." Psalm cxix., 5. The fear of sin was the principal, the most painful and the most urgent of the motives which induced her to sigh after the day of eternal deliverance. The thought of her weakness and of the dangers of life pursued her everywhere; can we then be surprised at the desires which made her long so ardently for God? Can we be astonished that she should so constantly and ardently desire to reach that blessed country, of which the Church speaks as follows, by the mouth of one of the Fathers: "Let us consider the ineffable happiness of that holy city from whence pain, sadness and groaning are banished. Is there anything happier than a life where poverty is not to be feared, where the infirmity of sickness

*patriam incessantibus se amoris stimulis excitat.* S. Gregor. Magni. Moral. lib I. c. 25.

does not exist? Where no one is offended, no one is angry. There none are envious, passion has no empire there, neither the desire of false honour or power carries any away. No fear or snare of the devil has place there; far from thence are the terrors of hell. No death is there either of the body or the soul; but in its place a life rendered delightful by the gift of immortality.\* And thus too we may easily understand the wonderful abandonment to the will of God practised by Anna Maria in the greatest sadness of soul, as well as the extreme distress of her family. She was filled with this feeling every time (and it was very often each day) that she laid before God the spiritual and corporal needs of herself and those belonging to her. Every evening she said an "Our Father" for this intention before the altar in her humble dwelling; she did so with a spirit of faith and confidence which moved the very depths of the soul. It was in God and not in men that she placed all her hopes, not less in

\* Consideremus ergo inclytam urbis illius felicitatem . . . aufugiet ibi dolor, et tristitia, et gemitus. Quid hac vita beatius, ubi non est paupertatis metus, non ægritudinis imbecillitas? Nemo lædetur, erascetur nemo; nemo invidet, cupiditas nulla exardescit, nullum ibi desiderium honoris pulsat, aut potestatis ambitio. Nullus ibi diaboli metus, insidiæ dæmonum nullæ, terror gehennæ procul; mors neque corporis neque, animæ erit sed immortalitatis munere vita jucunda. Serm. xviii. Ven. Bedæ presb. De Sanctis.



corporal necessities than in those of the soul. And God *Who loves the poor*, as He had Himself told her, left both her and hers poor, it is true, but in times of extreme need, He never abandoned her. This heroic confidence in the assistance of God and His protection, Anna Maria not only practised herself, with her family, but she also knew how to inspire others with it, in an extraordinary degree. So that either in private or public affairs, in matters which regarded herself or her neighbour, far from being discouraged or discouraging those around her, she felt herself and made others feel increased ardour and confidence as the difficulties multiplied. She then recalled to mind the precious instructions she had received from her Beloved, and she endeavoured to put them constantly in practice, hoping against all hope. "When you see difficulties in the affairs with which you have to do," said Our Lord to her; "when you find troubles, contradictions and obstacles in them, know that those things are dear and agreeable to Me, and that they will end well. Easy things seem good, but there is a secret poison in them; they succeed at first, then they spoil."

So that the more difficult the things were which Anna Maria had in view for herself and for her neighbour, with so much the more

confidence did she turn to our Lord, calling Him her most loving Father, her most amiable Spouse, her sweetest Friend, her most affectionate Brother, her Treasure and her all for time and eternity.

It is for Him, she said, to draw us out of trouble and to overcome difficulties; we must leave to Him the care of everything and trust in Him; for he who trusts in God shall never be confounded. This filial and amorous confidence shone forth also in a remarkable manner in her when she urged great sinners to overcome discouragement and despair, those extreme means of perdition which the devil employs to triumph over grace in souls. She regulated herself then according to the words which had been said to her by our Lord, who made known to her a great truth on this subject.

“If the cunning serpent,” said He, “succeeds in casting hearts into profound sadness, be sure that he has laid his nets there, that he is drawing these souls into a precipice, and that a special grace is necessary to deliver them. Dost thou know what My dear Philip” (St. Philip Neri) “did when a taciturn, proud and insincere person came to him? He drove him away and would not hear him. But if a sinner came to him of a cordial, loving character, full of frankness, he pressed him

against his breast and did not leave him before he had placed him in the way of sanctification." Like St. Philip Neri, Anna Maria had for sinners of good will words which opened their hearts to confidence in God's mercy. Moreover these were not in her mouth vain words, but the expression of a profound feeling of hope resting on charity.

Thus while she excited sinners to confidence and repentance, she took upon herself the weight of a considerable portion of the penance. She did so by means of the austerities which in spite of her infirmities she practised, as far as obedience permitted and according as her other duties allowed.

In the interior sufferings, which she had to bear, she practised also this virtue of hope, in a degree well worthy of our admiration. This is what we are told about it: "In her interior trials, which were long and most painful, she would not distract herself from them, or lessen them by any human means, however simple and innocent in themselves, such as taking a walk or anything of a like nature. She hoped and trusted in the goodness of God alone, and kept herself in solitude, refusing every kind of relief from creatures." The Christian soul who has penetrated ever so little into the ways of God, and has felt the need of pouring itself out, which these inte-

rior desolations cause, will understand without difficulty, the height of perfection contained in so heroic a practice of hope. "I have never hoped in creatures," she said often, "in the worst of these difficulties and troubles. I have always hoped in God alone; I hope and I have confidence that not having abandoned me up to this time, He will not for the future." And in this simple expression of the feelings of her soul, she made without knowing it, the most beautiful eulogium of herself.

Jesus, my hope, have pity on me! Mother of hope, pray to Jesus for me! such were the frequent ejaculations which escaped her lips and her heart. Let them also be ours in times of anguish and trouble. Like Anna Maria let us unceasingly repeat in aridities, as in the sweetness of hope: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, I shall not be confounded." In te Domine speravi non confundar in æternum.

## CHAPTER X.

HER CHARITY AND ZEAL FOR THE  
SALVATION OF SOULS.

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” 1. Cor. xiii. 1, 2.

The most simple recital of the actions of this servant of God proves in a striking manner that her life from the time of her conversion till her death, was a continual act of the love of God. Happy is he who can imitate this admirable model! happy he who shall be able to understand the extent of this wonder of the mercies of Our Lord, in a soul for a time stained with sin but soon become so pure!

God in His goodness had told this privileged soul many times that He desired to remain with her continually in a sensible manner, to take up His abode with her and to make her heart the place of His rest; and ever faithful to His promise, He had in a most consoling manner, accomplished the words which He had spoken to her in the fervour of her penance. Now if in earthly affections the presence of the one who is beloved has so many charms,

for the soul that loves; if continually dwelling together contributes in so powerful a manner to bind more closely together hearts which affection unites, with what ineffable delights must the sensible presence of the Sovereign Beauty inundate the souls to whom God thus deigns to communicate Himself! With what deep feelings of self annihilation and of love, did He not in particular fill the heart of Anna Maria! Holy souls whom the Lord has loaded with His gifts, you alone can explain it. Our weakness and unworthiness allow us only to admire without understanding, to humble and annihilate ourselves at the thought of these mysterious effusions of eternal love. We have said elsewhere what effects this love produced in Anna Maria, when but recently given to God, she fell into extasies of love of which the carnal eyes, which looked upon her, understood so little the cause. We have also spoken of what, as victim of this same love, she had to suffer amid her interior trials, the bitterness of which was not removed by the sensible presence of her God. This presence at such times produced in her the double effect which the sacred Humanity of Our Lord experienced in the garden of Olives and on Calvary, and although the effect produced in her was, of course not to be compared to what He felt,

yet it was analogous to it.—And so she, like Him, at these times of agony and abandonment, cried out: “My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned me?” *Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me?* Matt. xxvii. 46. “Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from me.” *Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste.* Matt. xxvi. 39. But as the love of Our Divine Lord for men and His Father showed itself in a far more sublime manner in the agony in the garden and in His death upon the cross, than in the midst of the splendours of Thabor, so also the love of this poor woman, crucified in heart, in the midst of the trials of the most holy days of her life, was incomparably more perfect than it had been amid sensible favours and first fervours. And that so much the more as, according to the intimate and supernatural assurance she had received, no one was then to understand the interior torture which she endured; but it was revealed to her that the remembrance of it would be preserved in heaven, written in letters of gold, that in heaven her suffering love should be known, that there it would have its reward, that her patience in this long martyrdom would there be crowned. This word martyrdom moreover well expresses the bitterness of the pains, and the weight of the cross which love imposed on

her. In the painful state in which the servant of God was, tribulations of every kind pressed with redoubled weight on her. The inferior part of her soul felt this desolation to the utmost, and thus rendered the endurance of it more meritorious. She suffered troubles, sadness, sickness, contradictions, insults, continual calumnies, want, contempt and abandonment by all; but by heroic efforts, she at last rendered her soul indifferent to all, as a stranger to all, dead to all things but the love of her God. We must not, therefore, be surprised besides the reward promised to so much virtue in heaven, this generous woman obtained by her prayers, the most precious fruit of this love on earth: I mean the most signal grace for herself and others. To her prayers the most wonderful conversions were granted, and also the most abundant temporal and spiritual favours, principally at times when she was prey to the deepest desolation. In this way she found in the heroic endurance of her trials a plentiful source of graces for others. In these crosses also she recognized the merciful purification of which the Fathers speak: "The Lord gives to sinners a most painful chalice of suffering, to take from them what remains of gall and bitterness, and to restore them to primitive sanctity.\* It was

\* Dominus dat calicem tormentorum meracissimus



her great love of God which gave Anna Maria such a hatred of sin, so great a zeal for the glory of God, and so tender a devotion to the august sacrament of our altars, and we should add to these, of which we have already spoken, a new trait showing more fully the greatness and purity of her love. She took the utmost care not to fall into the illusions of those souls who take complacency in themselves in proportion as they are more lovingly favoured by God. With this view she detached herself from the sensible delights of thanksgiving after communion, rather than seeking to excite them in herself; but when both soul and body were in a state of torture, weighed down by aridity of mind and interior pains of every kind, and she was in such anguish that a cold sweat covered her limbs, when in her thanksgiving a few minutes appeared to her like long hours of a painful night watching, she then prolonged it, in a way which was a subject of great admiration to the few persons in her confidence to whom she had previously made known the overwhelming desolation of her heart. From her great love of God arose her indefatigable and universal charity for her neighbour: on this head her virtue of charity was very great,

*ut quidquid fellis amaritudinisque est, auferat a peccatoribus, et pristinae eos restituat sanitati.*—S. Hier. comment. in Ezech. lib. vii. c. 23.

her divine Lord had Himself taught her the practice of it, saying to her: "No one can reach the happiness which My elect enjoy unless by doing violence to himself he becomes a child, without having first acquired true, true charity. Whosoever possesses charity My daughter, has patience. Charity is active it works with zeal and love. It speaks evil of no one, because it fears to lose so precious a pearl. Although it understands all, sees all, perceives all, it covers all nevertheless with its mantle. It embraces all with its love, compassions all, and says to itself: 'Alas, my God, how much worse should I be, did not Thou come to my aid!'" This charity in Anna Maria was universal; it was equal for all in virtue of the principle which produced it which was the love of God; but it was at the same time wisely regulated as to its application according to the order of justice. Thus, as we have seen, her heart was never for an instant withdrawn from the special duties of charity, which her position as a mother of a family imposed on her. Nor did she ever, for an instant, lose sight of that great truth, that the good of souls must ever be considered before the temporal advantages of our neighbour, that consequently the first exercise of charity to our brethren must be to advance the interests of their salvation and sanctification

—Moreover she never forgot that in the charity which would console others in their troubles, there is nothing too little in the attentions we show them, nothing too little in the causes of pain of which those in sorrow speak to us, when they come to seek help and consolations at our hands; that a poor woman, reduced to want in her humble dwelling, deserves our time and commiseration, as much as a great Lord in disgrace, or a monarch driven from his throne; that if there be a time in life and circumstances in which, according to the language of Holy Scripture, a christian ought to make no exception of persons, it is certainly when our brother is in misfortune. And this is what Anna Maria always practised. The Queen of Etruria, whom she so often consoled, was no more in her charitable eyes than the most humble servant whose tears she could wipe away. It was admirable, for instance, to hear her consoling a poor woman, who was complaining to her that she had fewer eggs, from her poultry yard for sale, than she used to have, and that hence she was reduced to greater poverty than that which she had suffered before, to hear her giving instruction how to remedy the evil, and that with the utmost sweetness and charity, and then to hear her afterwards speak of matters of the highest moment both delicate and difficult,

resolve difficulties and give suitable counsels, with the same simplicity and the same ease, as when occupied with the concerns of the poor woman. She acted in the same way in cases of illness, praying for a poor fruit-seller or the wife of a carter as for a princess, excepting indeed that when the poor were in question, she would be the more fervent and full of charity. This charity of predilection for the poor had been remarkable in her from her childhood; she drew it, as all her other virtues, from her great faith and her love of God. The poor were in her eyes the loved ones of Jesus; this gave them a peculiar title to her love. In spite of her own poverty she never ceased aiding them. She often asked and obtained their health of God by prayers, penances and watchings. She procured alms for them, also, either from the scanty resources she might possess at the moment, or by interesting the rich in their favour. Many families recommended themselves to her and were assisted by her. Again, among her usual works of charity was that of visiting and taking care of the sick. For this purpose she frequented the hospitals, particularly that of St. James for women afflicted with incurable diseases. There she would tend and wait upon the most hideous of the patients in the most charitable and touching manner, and she

never left them without having done still more good to their souls than to their bodies. These were the sort of visits of which she gave her daughters an example. She used to take them there with her from time to time, in order to give them practical lessons of that charity of which her own heart was full. As for the exercise of spiritual charity, she never failed to practise it on every occasion, which presented itself. In all her conversations, in every manner of encouraging others she constantly exercised it in the most direct manner. In the first place she never allowed a single word to be said before her against her neighbour, always excusing and hiding the faults of others. Then, if the person in fault came to her for counsel, she was equally careful with sweetness and firmness to reprehend him. When any one complained of wrongs received, she listened with patience and charity, letting the heart find vent; then she would give salutary and affectionate advice, engaging the person to bear with all for the sake of peace, recalling continually the warning she had received from our Lord, "If God did not preserve you from it, you would do much worse." At other times, when there was question of the faults of persons high in the government, she added, "Let us adore the designs of God, we deserve this evil on account of our sins."

Thus to restore peace to those who came to her, or whose hatred for one another God had shown her, to reconcile all who were at variance, was one of her most delightful and most precious occupations. It was particularly between husbands and wives that she endeavoured either herself or by means of her friends, to bring back peace where it had been lost; for she knew the numberless evils which arise from disunion between married people. One day she begged a priest, whom she knew well, to go for this purpose to the house of a man without education, and whose temper was coarse and violent. She warned the priest at the same time that the man would get in a passion, that he would even threaten him with a knife, but that he must trust in God and fear nothing, and reprehend the man severely, that he would then become calm and gentle and docile as a child. Every thing happened as Anna Maria had foreseen. This man seized a knife and threatened the charitable priest, who had done as the servant of God requested him. The priest, on this, acted according to the counsel he had received, and the man fell on his knees before him weeping. Then the reconciliation between himself and his wife was effected.

In public troubles and necessities Anna Maria's charity was great, as we have seen in

speaking of her influence over the political events of the time. What penances and good works did she not perform, what prayers did she not address to God to obtain peace for His people and for Rome in particular ! Our Lord alone knows what she undertook to appease His anger at the time Pius VII. suffered so much persecution from Napoleon. She foresaw the termination of this persecution, and predicted even the triumph which would follow for the Church, and the very day on which this triumph would be celebrated in Rome on the return of the Sovereign Pontiff. She redoubled her prayers at the important time of the Conclaves. So also during the illness which threatened the life of Leo XII.<sup>a</sup> a short time after his election. Later, according to a warning she received from above, she powerfully aided by her prayers the same Pontiff to die a holy death. She prayed, fasted, and mortified herself also with a zeal and charity more and more ardent, as revolutions menaced the Church in a more imminent degree, as happened under the last Pontiffs.

In all these events, as also in the misfortunes which afflicted or threatened all the nations of the world, doubtless the sight of temporal calamities cruelly pained her heart; but what overwhelmed her with grief was the thought of the crimes and offences against God,

which were added to them. The zeal and charity which she felt for the conversion of each individual sinner, about whom she was interested, will make this understood. She then multiplied her prayers, mortifications and pious practices, amongst which she liked particularly that of ascending the staircase of the Ara-cœli, that of visiting the seven churches, partly bare-footed, the way of the cross, and visiting the most retired sanctuaries. Then when she had thus prepared, by recourse to God, the way for the conversion of these sinners, she either spoke to them herself or got other servants of God to speak to them. In this way they with difficulty escaped her zeal. Among those who cost her most to bring back latterly, we may name three, with regard to whom the charity of Anna Maria triumphed over the most formidable obstacles. The first was a priest who, although regular in his conduct, had, through living in Anti-Catholic countries, become embued with doctrines in little conformity with the truths of the Gospel. She ended by bringing him back to the right way. The other apparently moderately good in his conduct, was also filled with false doctrines. The servant of God worked twenty years at his conversion, and at length succeeded. The last was a young man of dissolute habits, whom the venerable



Strambi had declared to be a hardened sinner, and had given up on account of his obstinacy. Anna Maria obtained also his conversion; but God knows of what penances and prayers this was the fruit.

There was another class of sinners for whom the charitable woman felt a peculiar tenderness, those condemned to death. Generally when she heard that an execution was to take place the next day, she prepared to suffer the pains which our Lord never failed to send her as the price of the conversion which she solicited. And in fact these sufferings always came upon her, for the intensity of her ordinary infirmities was increased in a most painful manner. One day, according to her custom, she was going with a priest, who was in her confidence, to communicate in the Church of our Lady of Mercy. The priest recommended to her prayers three unfortunate persons who were to be executed that day. Anna Maria prayed and heard these words: "The woman does not come, they have commuted her sentence; the others will not be converted. They end their life thus, less on account of the crimes for which the government has condemned them than for more considerable ones: it is for the way in which they treated their parents." Towards mid day she heard again, "The woman has not been brought, and the others are not con-

verted.” Meanwhile Anna Maria’s sufferings increased in a most cruel manner ; they became so great that she was obliged to go to bed, but they became greater and greater until after the execution. In this state she lovingly complained to her beloved and said to Him, knowing well that her sufferings were in consequence of these condemned persons not being yet converted: “But, Lord, what have I to do with these unhappy people?” Towards evening she heard in reply a sweet and consoling voice say, “Thou hast given Me thy will and I am the Master of it, So, as I saw thee one day so lovingly touched with compassion for some unfortunate people in the same condition, thou art now thus tried in consequence of my desires. I give thee what I once took from thee ; but it is not in sensible sweetness. Out of love for thee I have converted these souls ; they are saved. They are so on account of the love I bear thee. All has ended well : but I take from thee satisfaction for My justice.” In this way Anna Maria found in her love of God the source of love and zeal for her neighbour. Let us examine further how from the same source, sprung the other virtues with which her soul was so beautifully adorned.

## CHAPTER XI.

## HER PRUDENCE AND JUSTICE.

“ Say to wisdom: thou art my sister, and call prudence thy friend.” Prov. vii. 4.

“ The prudence and wisdom of a woman according to God, consists in keeping herself continually in the Divine presence,” such were the sweet words which the Good Master addressed to his faithful servant; then He added, “ Do not say that I am far from thee, for I repose in thy heart!” Happy the soul for whom the celestial Spouse reserves such favours! happy, far more happy those who profit by them to advance continually in the way of the perfect! happy those who can understand and taste the words of a great doctor of the Church: “ Nescit tarda molimina Spiritus Sancti gratia!” “ The grace of the Holy Spirit knows not delay!”

Anna Maria was of the number of those who do understand them. Constantly faithful to the grace which urged her never to delay in obeying, never to resist the voice of her Beloved, she learnt prudence from the constant union with God, which so particularly characterized her. Thus regulating every step

according to the principles of a wholly christian prudence, she never undertook anything whether in the common matters of domestic life, or in actions of a more exalted character without carefully preparing herself by prayer without in this way rendering herself more attentive to the presence of her God. It was in this way, and not through the confidence with which the supernatural lights she received from God might have inspired her, it was in this way, and the practice of perfect obedience, that she learned to recognize and to follow prudently the ways of the Lord. "Recollect," said her heavenly Spouse to her, "that thou must be prudent in all things; for where there is true prudence there is true virtue, and the evil spirit has no entrance there;" and she corresponded with most touching fidelity to the grace which maintained her in such perfect dispositions. In her humility and her prudence she found means ever to keep in mind for her guidance these other words of our Lord: "For any one not to allow himself to be carried away by the passionate emotions which temptation excites is a proof of the special assistance of God." The same virtue, the same reserve directed her equally in the practices of devotion and her relations with her neighbour, particularly when recourse was had to her for counsel. Full of zeal for the salvation of souls

and love for God, she gave herself up with ardour to the pious practices which Catholic charity has introduced into the Church with so much fruit. But in that, as in every other point, she was attentive to regulate herself according to the most wise prudence. Thus, whether for herself or for others, she carefully avoided all practices which could flatter self-love, that perfidious enemy ever in arms against souls. For this end, unless in the case of a very clear and evident movement of grace, she warmed others by her counsels and was herself on her guard against striking novelties: she turned away from those flattering good works from which the human gratification of attaching our name so often takes away the merit before God, however excellent the good works may be in themselves. In order to keep herself and others under the more immediate guidance of God, she never gave any important counsel but after pious meditations and prayers. She was at the same time careful to regulate her devotional practices so as not to interfere with her domestic duties, which she knew were the first and most important. Although at Holy Mass and Communion such great favours and spiritual delights were granted her, she never hesitated to deprive herself of them when the cares of her family required it. In the manner of ruling

her house the same wise and Christian prudence was observable. When, as we have seen, she might have placed herself and those belonging to her in a position of ease above her condition, she would never consent to do so. She was chiefly influenced in this by two motives : one was her desire to avoid all that could withdraw her from the humble state in life in which Providence had placed her. The other, the wish not to create for her family, by the habits which easy circumstances would bring, wants, which later in life, perhaps, they would not be able to satisfy. All who know the people of Rome well will recognize in this conduct a proof of prudence and of wisdom far above the sentiments of the common people. She gave far higher marks of the perfection with which she practised this virtue, when with persons of high rank in society or the Church. We have already spoken of the marked affection shown her by the Queen of Etruria, and the entire confidence she placed in her. Never did her humble friend think of abusing it ; never did she forget the great difference between her own position and that of the princess, and she withdrew herself from the greater familiarity to which the kind feeling of the Queen would have led her. She firmly and constantly refused to come and live near her, in spite of many solicitations and assurances of

the care which should be taken of her whole family. She refused like offers from Cardinal Medicini, who had the highest estimation of Anna Maria's prudence, often asking her counsel; he would have wished to relieve her entirely from household cares. Anna Maria in these refusals gave a double proof of humility and prudence; for, if on the one hand she was determined to remain in her lowly condition, she, on the other, retained unshackled her right to speak to the great a language, respectful indeed, but frank and loyal, the language it always becomes a christian to hold. Without any regard to her own interests and the susceptibilities of men, she made use, with liberty, of this holy liberty of the children of God. One day Cardinal Fesch begged her to pray for the health of his much loved sister, Madame Letitia; Anna Maria, after fervent prayers, said to him, "Tell her highness to meditate on these three points: what she has been, what she is, and what she will be; and at the same time to prepare herself for death." A thousand examples of a like liberty, in treating with the great, might be cited. She often said: "Whoever wishes to serve the Lord must be humble and respectful, but at the same time simple and sincere." Thus the most distinguished personages had recourse, with the greatest confidence and the greatest fruit, to

her counsels, which were dictated by the purest charity joined to the most extraordinary supernatural lights. How often have Cardinals and Bishops, particularly the venerable Strambi, had recourse to these lights for guidance in the most important affairs! How often have princes and ministers of state come to her with the same confidence. And nevertheless this humble servant of God, far from glorying in her heart, or before men on account of such marks of deference and esteem, recollecting herself in silence and the annihilation of her soul before God, referred all the glory to Him Who was the only source of it. The love of justice in her was not less visible than that of prudence and wisdom; she rendered to God, to her neighbour, and herself what was due to each in a truly remarkable degree. Towards God she acquitted herself before all things, according to the teaching of true piety, of those religious duties which raise the soul and unite it in so consoling a manner to the Supreme Majesty. Annihilated in her humility at the remembrance of her past life and at the thought of the many graces which she could not but recognize in herself, she ever, as we have already said, referred to God all which in justice belonged to Him. Profoundly humble, she was far from taking pride in the eminent favours, which she was the means of



obtaining for souls; to God alone did she refer all the praise of them. With regard to her neighbour, she was equally careful to give to each what she owed him, and this particularly in what regarded his reputation, constantly repressing in herself whatever tended to want of charity or to murmuring. Ever ready to excuse others, she was strongly averse to the spirit of criticism and bad feeling, to all those sallies of wit or bad humour, which make people so often sacrifice without pity, the honour, happiness, and peace of their neighbour. Even when the evil was evident her charitable spirit of justice found some excuse for every one, or at least something which might lessen the blame, as true charity to their neighbour makes holy souls so ingenious in discovering, and this was particularly the case where persons who had injured or opposed her were concerned; her manner of judging of those who had attacked, calumniated, continually ill-treated or spoken ill of her, was heroic for its moderation, justice, and charity. This sense of justice guided her in the loving and pious conduct to which she was ever true towards her father, her husband, and her children. What we have said of her affectionate patience towards them is sufficient to give some idea of it. It was this which induced her to diminish, at the time of her pregnancy and while nursing

her children, her habitual penances, which penances she never carried so far as to render her unable to fulfil her duties as a wife and as a mother. She considered herself strictly bound as a duty of justice to her children, to provide for their education, to see that they were well instructed in their religion, and to watch carefully over their conduct. Hence her care of them in all things was most assiduous. There was never seen in her house, the very shadow of the indecency or bad example, which unhappily are so often found particularly in poor families. Most careful to observe in her own relations as a wife, that modesty and reserve the want of which leads to such sad disorders, she watched carefully to prevent, in every way, another abuse still worse. We mean the dangerous and improper custom of allowing boys and girls to sleep in the same beds. Never in spite of the extreme poverty of her house would Anna Maria allow a thing, the thought of which caused her a feeling of horror. It was the same with regard to the other points in which she had to exercise the watchfulness of a good mother of a family.

With regard to strangers, particularly in matters of pecuniary interest, she never for a moment lost sight of what the Holy Scriptures relate of Tobias, that just man, the interior of

whose household was so like that of this saintly woman: "Whosoever shall have worked for thee," said the holy patriarch to his son, "give him at once his salary; never let the reward of the workman remain under the roof of thy house." Tob. iv. 15. Now this Anna Maria practised towards all with perfect generosity and exactitude. Her spirit of justice, as well as charity, made her consider herself under an obligation to show towards her neighbour great affability of manner and great sincerity in her words; and towards those who had done her any good, however little, the most touching gratitude. In fine her justice, so indulgent to others, seemed to have reserved for herself alone a hard severity. She exercised this justice on herself on account of the evil days of her youth, with a rigour of which we shall have some idea in casting a rapid glance at her works of mortification; we will not therefore speak of them here; but will close this subject, applying to this heroic woman these words of the Psalmist, "Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Ps. xliv. 8.

## CHAPTER XII.

## HER FORTITUDE AND TEMPERANCE.

"The Lord is my strength and my praise. He is become salvation to me," Exodus xv. 2.

The true strength of a Christian is from God: it is founded on an intimate sense of his own weakness and infirmity, united to a boundless confidence in the help of Divine goodness. Whoever then is humble and loves God is strong, most strong against himself, against the world, and against hell, our formidable enemies. Now Anna Maria was truly humble; she loved God with all her heart, with all her soul, and all her strength; it is not surprising, therefore, that after her conversion, she should have possessed a courage and constancy superior to all the events in life, and all the attacks of the enemy of our salvation. She gave proofs of a fortitude wholly christian in the perseverance with which she served our Lord, pressing forward, without looking back and without fear, in the way of perfection which grace had opened to her. She was in her own family amid the contradictions of every kind that she met with, truly the strong woman whose price, according to the language

of the Holy Scriptures, is from afar. She was indeed the strong woman in the temptations and interior desolation which our Lord added to her other sufferings; the strong woman in the mortified life which she led; the strong woman amidst the persecutions and calumnies which assailed her; the strong woman in the perseverance of her refusals to quit, or to allow those belonging to her, to quit the humble and poor condition in which our Lord had placed her; the strong woman, in fine, in her constancy in abnegation of self, in her hidden life in God, ever fastened to the cross of Jesus, continuing unknown to the greater part of those around her, living, in a word, that life of humble and loving souls, for whom God destines so much the greater glory, as the world has less known and honoured them on earth. O strong woman! happy is the man, who called to be the father of a family, finds you for his companion! how safe is his conduct reposing in your help, how peaceful and strong is his heart when you occupy it! "*Mulierem fortem quis inveniet procul et de ultimis finibus pretium ejus, confidit in ea cor viri sui et spoliis non indigebit.*" Prov. xxxi. 10. Such was Anna Maria to the husband God had chosen for her.

The virtues of perseverance, patience and

fortitude, which she ever showed in the midst of her domestic troubles and poverty, made her really an angel of peace and consolation to her husband and children. But it was particularly in the practice of a spiritual life that she gave beautiful examples of Christian fortitude. "Fortitude and constancy in the ways of God," she said to those whom she aided to acquire perfection, "are special marks, whereby those may be known who love our Lord sincerely." But the best, the most conclusive argument to persuade others to it was her own example.

She showed perseverance in everything she undertook. When she had begun one of those external practices of devotion, so useful in exciting Divine love in souls, unless there was an absolute impossibility of continuing it, she never gave it up. Neither the inclemency of the weather, nor fatigue, nor the infirmities with which she was overwhelmed, could make her change her resolution, or yield to the weakness of nature. Thus, for example, she was always regular in her pilgrimages to the cemetery of Santo Spirito, to the church of St. Paul beyond the walls, and in her visits to the seven churches, a devotion which she practised very frequently. Her perseverance was so much the more meritorious, as our Lord, to prove her virtue, seemed to raise unexpected

obstacles, before which any one less courageous would have given way. It was the same with the practices of voluntary mortifications, which were permitted her by obedience. She never abandoned them unless she received an order to do so from her director; and this also gave her many opportunities of perfecting herself still more in the virtue of obedience. She might often have lessened the crosses which our Lord sent her, not only with regard to the poverty of her family, but also on occasions of calumny and other unjust persecutions; but supported by the strength of her love and her patience, she never did so; she suffered all without complaint, following the example of her adorable Master, Who is represented by the prophet in so touching a manner as saying; "I was as a deaf man who hears not, and as one that is dumb not opening his mouth." Psalm xxxvii. 14. We shall see, later on, how she displayed this same greatness of soul in the sufferings and agony which preceded her happy death: let us now say a few words about her temperance, the first degree of mortification in a christian life. Her exterior alone, her manners, the peace expressed in her countenance, the sound of her voice would have been sufficient to show to what a degree of interior calmness she had attained, subduing in herself all the

movements of nature, practising in the fullest extent the precious virtues of reserve, modesty and temperance. Among the inhabitants of the city of Rome, with whom unhappily the sense of delicacy and modesty is so much weakened, it was a remarkable thing to see Anna Maria living in a married state, with a modesty and reserve in which, alas! so many young girls are wanting. Exposed as she was after her conversion, to so many temptations, interior and exterior, of all kinds, she found great help to resist them in the habit of reserve and moderation which she carried into everything. Having made a law to herself to restrain within the strictest limits of christian temperance, the most natural movements of her heart, she found in this holy habit a great help to repel the most dangerous attacks. The sad recollection of the past, recalled to her only too well the fatal consequences of the opposite conduct. So that in temptations in which the weakness of the heart leads to such lamentable disorders, she was so habituated to guard herself even in the expression of the purest affection, sustained also by a love of God which so far predominated in her over every other feeling, she was victorious, where virtue already shaken would have found the occasion of more than one fall. In temptations to resentment and



bitterness, which calumny and injustice might have excited, she so faithfully endeavoured to moderate in herself even the most natural, and often inevitable impression of the pain felt, that she found in this temperance an efficacious means of overcoming the assaults of the enemy. So in her discouragements and interior afflictions, in those trials in which, according to her own expression, she suffered mortal agonies, the continual care she took to moderate everything in her soul, opened to her at length a way of peace and salvation. As to the temperance practised by her in what regards the material things of life, that is to say temperance in eating and drinking, what we shall have to say respecting her continual fasts will be more than sufficient to give an idea of it. We ought however to remark, that her natural temperament gave her opportunities of meriting much in this matter before God. She was naturally much inclined to gratify her palate; she would have been inclined to seek delicacies, both in eating and drinking, but by dint of overcoming and mortifying herself incessantly, she succeeded, as it were in destroying in herself the sense of taste. And this was far from a small victory. In fact many souls, even endowed with natural delicacy, have found in sensualities of this nature, an occasion of shameful vices and terrible falls.

Anna Maria had received most efficacious encouragements to persevere in this way of continual mortification. She had had more than once, the happiness of hearing her Divine Master say to her on this subject, "That the mortification of the taste seemed of little importance to many, but that it pleased Him much, that if people desired to obtain peace and spiritual sweetness, they must practise it; that to give themselves up to the contrary excesses was, to renew the bitterness of His passion, the insults and outrages to which His divine mouth was then subjected." It will be easily understood what an impression these words would make on Anna Maria, and the inducement they were to her to persevere to the end in her spirit of continual mortification. So that particularly in the last years of her life, she had gained so much power over her exterior and interior inclinations, that she was freed from the sad empire of the senses under which we groan.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## HER INTERIOR MORTIFICATION.

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up His cross daily and follow Me,” St. Luke x. 23.

It is no uncommon thing to meet among persons devoted to the service of God, certain souls who wish to reconcile the practices of a christian life, with all the conveniences and lawful enjoyments of the world; souls who at the words “cross and renunciation” reply as did the Jews of old, astounded at the great truth the Saviour taught, “This is a hard word, who shall hear it?” It is not uncommon to meet with Christians, inclined to close their hearts to the instruction which the Church gives them by the mouth of one of the Fathers, “It is written in the Gospel: whoever accepts not his cross *every day*, loves not Christ. That we may not think that ardent faith can suffice, we must carry our cross *always*, if we would *always* show that we love Jesus Christ. In Evangelio scribitur: Qui non accipit crucem suam quotidie, ne semel putemus ardorem fidei posse sufficere: semper crux portanda est, ut super nos Christum

amare doceamus.”—S. Hier. comment. in Matt. lib. I. c. 10.

Nor is it a rare thing to meet with those who confining their perfection within the narrow limits of an egotism, sanctified in their own eyes by an appearance of devotion, refuse to disturb the usual order of their own personal happiness, even at the call of charity to their brethren. Others, on the contrary, are willing to serve their neighbour, and undertake even painful works of charity for him: but on one condition, that their own self-love should be flattered. Some urged on by the same feeling of self-love, embrace crosses, fast and mortify themselves in secret, it is true, but taking real complacency in themselves. For others, the delights of contemplation seem to form the foundation of perfection, the end of all their thoughts, the object of their continual occupation, and sometimes of a false complacency. But as the author of the *Spiritual Combat* so wisely and so justly says, all these souls deceive themselves more or less. A true christian life “consists in knowing the goodness and the greatness of God, our own nothingness and inclination to evil. It consists in the love of God and hatred of ourselves, in our submission, not only to God, but for love of Him, to every creature. It consists in the giving up of our own will, in the total

abandonment of ourselves to the good pleasure of God; with this condition also, that all things be desired and done purely for His glory, to please Him alone, because He wills it thus, and He merits to be served and loved." *Spiritual Combat*, Ch. I. In a word, as Our Lord has taught, whosoever will be His disciple must renounce himself and follow Him. In this does the virtue of interior mortification, based on a universal renunciation of self, principally consist, a virtue at once so rare, so precious, and so difficult to establish perfectly in the soul. And this, as we shall see, is what Anna Maria practised. This is what she learned from the direct teaching of Our Lord at different times. "Oh My daughter," was one day said to her, "spiritual profit does not consist in penance; it does not consist in the participation of the Sacraments, nor in compunction of heart, but in the persevering union of the will with mine;" and again another time, "whoever wishes to follow Me and to walk in My steps; whoever wishes truly to serve Me must every where and in every thing contradict his own will. Such are My true servants; they obtain from Me all they desire." And thus completely persuaded of the importance and efficacy of continual interior mortification, in the christian life, Anna Maria constantly repeated to her-

self and to others, "We ought always to steer against the current." A beautiful expression which so forcibly reminds us of that of St. Gregory: "In this world the human soul is like a ship sailing up a river, it can never remain stationary: if it ceases to advance towards the source, it recedes."\* Anna Maria had besides understood what her Divine Master intended to teach her in these words: "Know that thou art never henceforward to say: I will this; this thing displeases me; such a thing is painful to me, and I will not do it. These are the words of worldly persons," and this is the reason why, in the contradictions of every kind which she had to bear, she showed so much patience and abnegation. Therefore also in her intercourse with others, if she felt a natural sympathy for any one, she was careful not to yield to it; if, on the contrary, she felt a repugnance she showed particular kindness. If she had not merited, as she had done, by doing violence to herself to see accomplished in her, these words which she had heard in her loving colloquies with her Divine Master: "He who is humble is patient; and he who is patient, sanctifies him-

\* In hoc mundo humana anima quasi more navis est contra ictum fluminis conscendentis: uno in loco nequam stare permittitur, quia ad ima relabitur nisi ad summa conetur.—S. Greg. Past. pars iii. c. xxxiv.

self,"—if she had not entirely overcome herself, how could she have borne with such exemplary patience, the terrible calumnies with which she was loaded? A single example will show us to what a degree of perfection her virtue had reached on this point, and how advantageous the practice of complete self-renunciation is to souls. It was evident that she was penetrated with the sentiment expressed by St. Bernard: "Humiliation is the road to humility, as patience is the road to peace, as study leads to knowledge. If thou seekest the virtue of humility, do not fly from humiliations." The circumstance we refer to, was as follows: For many years a neighbour of Anna Maria's had conceived so great and violent a hatred for her, that she neither spared injurious words nor bad treatment; she accused her publicly, at home and abroad, of affecting, with hypocritical fraud, an exterior semblance of piety, and of leading at the same time, a most scandalous life, giving particulars which it is unnecessary to repeat, and asserting that she had seen with her own eyes the disorders of which she spoke. This cross and this persecution lasted more than eight years, and not a week passed without some fresh attack from her. In spite of the pain which Anna Maria felt, not only on her own account, but still more on account of her daughters, whose

honour was implicated, never for a moment did she lose her heroic patience. She only prayed to God to enlighten this unhappy woman, and to pardon her so much wickedness and such insults. She never met her without accosting her, with a kindness of manner and a sweetness which would have disarmed the hardest heart. She never lost any opportunity of rendering her good for evil. In a word she put in practice with regard to her the beautiful doctrine of the Gospel commented on by St. Jerome. "If thine enemy hunger, give him to eat; if he thirst give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head, not to his condemnation and imprecation as many think; but to lead him to repentance and amendment, so that vanquished by benefits and inflamed by the ardour of charity, he may cease to be thy enemy."\*

At the sight of so much virtue, well may we exclaim with another Father: "Oh, how much do I wish that I could glorify thee better by practising thee, O patience, queen of all things. I know indeed that thou art

\* S. Hier. Dial. cont. Pelag. n. 30. Si esuriam inimicus tuus, ciba illum: si sitit, potum da illi; sed enim taciens, carbonem ignis congeres super caput ejus: non in maledictum et condemnationem, ut plerique existimant, sed in correctionem et pœnitentiam: superatus a beneficiis excoctus fervore charitatis, inimicus esse desistat.



etter pleased with that which forms habits of  
 nee, thy basis, thy counsels, rather than with  
 ain words, which are nothing worth; I know  
 at thy glory consists less in multiplying  
 virtues than in rendering them perfect. It is  
 thou who comest to the aid of virginity that  
 o evil may tarnish its beauty. Thou art  
 ver the safe harbour of afflicted widowhood,  
 mid the numerous assaults of the tempest;  
 ke to a skilful guide, thou leadest with an  
 qual step and by the aid of gentle restraints,  
 those who bear the yoke of marriage, thou  
 adest them in the efforts of united labour  
 nd in the duties of reciprocal conjugal love.  
 t is thou who teachest the friend to will and  
 ot will in concert with his friend. Thou  
 one all-powerful consolation of slavery, thou  
 ten bringest forth liberty. It is thou who  
 akest poverty obtain all things, by rendering  
 er happy in bearing her evils. Thou hast  
 uised prophets, thou hast united the apostles  
 o Jesus Christ. Thou art ever the mother  
 nd the crown of martyrs. Thou art the  
 umpart of faith, the fruit of hope, and the  
 iend of charity. Blessed then, for ever  
 essed, is he who can possess thee always.”\*

\* “O quam vellem te, si possim, rerum omnium re-  
 na, patientia, magis moribus concelebrare! Scio enim  
 ia libentius in tuis moribus, tuis fundamentis, tisque  
 nsiliis, quam in alienis nudisque sermonibus conquies-

Blessed therefore was Anna Maria who, as we have seen, practised this great virtue of patience in so eminent a degree. Our Lord made known to her even in this world, how much her virtue in this point pleased Him; at the same time divine justice did not permit that those who so unjustly gave her the opportunity of exercising it, should remain unpunished. This was particularly seen in the case of the unhappy woman who had treated her so cruelly. She fell gradually into a state of the most abject poverty; and at length, together with other beggars in the public squares, often received alms from her whom she had so outrageously insulted. And for the humble servant of God, what we have related is sufficient to show how well she

cis," neque tantum in multiplicandis virtutibus laudem ponis, quantum in finiendis. Tu virginitati prastas, flos ejus ullo morbo, ullo tempore deflorescat. Tu variorum semper in tempestatum crebris turbinibus constanta fidissimus miserandæ viduitatis es portus. Tu sartissimo conjugali jugo rudi cervice subeuntes in nisu laboris, vel amoris æqualitatem retinaculis blandis, quæ quidam peritus auriga componis. Tu amicitiam idem velle, atque idem nolle docuisti. Tu servituti ut ca ac fortissima consolatio sæpe libertatem paris. Tu paupertati præstas, ut habeat totum sui contenta, et sustinet totum. Tu prophetas provexisti. Christo Apostolos glutinasti. Tu quotidiana martyrum et mater et corona. Tu murus fidei, fructus spei, amica charitatis. . . . Felix in æternumque felix est, qui semper te habet in se."—S. Zen. Veron. Episc. Sermo de Patientia

new how to conform her conduct to the counsels which she had received. "True sanctity consists in bearing patiently interior and exterior trials. A soul which suffers patiently the tribulations which come to her through the medium of creatures, is greater than one who gives herself to works of penance. Ah! my daughter, every one desires My love, every one wishes to have My peace, all would wish to taste My delights; but the veil of self-love which covers their eyes, makes them seek temporal goods and honours. What is the use of saying: 'I rejoice in being humbled, since for the love of God I should be ready to suffer every thing, seeing that my sins deserve hell?' Whereas when I subject them to some light trial, they become agitated, disquieted and will not be resigned! This is not fine fidelity truly!" True fidelity is known when a person suffering externally and internally, says not a word, ever equable, not allowing herself to make a single complaint to any one. We must prefer that penance which patience imposes upon all, to every other mortification, since he who possesses patience, possesses all things. In virtue of this great spirit of interior mortification, Anna Maria bore with great courage, all the other trials which Our Lord deigned to give her so unparingly. "He who tastes interior consola-

tion," said He to her one day, "ought not to desire exterior ones." And this word of encouragement was sufficient to make her redouble her courage. Another time this same oracle of wisdom, speaking of her and another soul longing, like herself, for perfection, addressed to her these words: "O my children, whom do you desire to love? God stripped of all things, or a God of consolation? You must combat the world, the flesh and the devil, in order that you may know how great your weakness is, that you may know how hideous a thing the world is, and what the creatures of the world are. You must acquire virtues by fighting, that you may know the value of My grace, when you receive it." This was again a most efficacious lesson of interior renunciation which Our Lord gave her. The continual progress she made in this virtue, shows how well she profited by it. This virtue of abnegation which animated her, had filled her as well as easily be understood with a spirit of obedience not less worthy of notice. Again, on this subject, God in His goodness had deigned to show her the secure road to effect in herself continual and rapid progress in perfection. Although she was wonderfully enlightened and guided in a manner altogether supernatural, Anna Maria had nevertheless received a fo-

mal command to do "neither more nor less than what her confessor should tell her. A single degree of obedience, is as much greater than a degree of penance, as the virtue of obedience is above that of penance." Such was the admonition she had received directly from Our Lord. So that she did absolutely nothing of any importance, without having recourse to the counsels of him, whom faith showed her clearly to be the certain organ of the will of God. This virtue was so deeply engraven on her heart, that even in the extasies of love and other celestial favours which were granted to her, she often received the grace, remarked in other holy souls, of coming out of them and withdrawing herself from these ineffable delights, in virtue of the simple mental obedience, which was laid on her.

In short, her death itself was in a certain way occasioned or at least hastened by one of those heroic acts of abnegation, which the Church has commemorated in some of the most illustrious servants of God, placed on our altars. We shall say something of it in speaking of her last sickness. How great and noble is virtue like this, and how incapable is the natural man in his pride of understanding it!

## CHAPTER XIV.

## HER EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION.

"I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for His Body which is the Church," Col. i. 24.

These words which the great apostle had so eminently the right to apply to himself, are applicable, though in a less and lower degree, to all those souls who desire sincerely to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ; who desire every day to take up their cross and follow after Him; who wish to suffer and to die with Him amidst the tears and sufferings of Calvary, in order to ascend, one day, with Him to the glorious heights of Thabor. They are specially and justly applicable to the generous woman, to whom we may also perfectly apply those words of St. Bernard: "Blessed is he who regulates himself according to justice in the sufferings of the body, so that what he suffers, he suffers for the love of the Son of God; so that discarding every murmur from his heart, lets words of thanksgiving proceed from his mouth, and his voice resounds with hymns of praise."\* And in some manner also may be said

\* Felix qui passiones corporis sui propter justitiam ordinat, ut quicquid patitur propter Dei Filium patiatur:

of her what was said by the prophet, announcing to the world the sufferings of the Saint of saints, "From the sole of the foot to the crown of His head, there was no soundness." Is. i. 6.

During many years she suffered, especially on Fridays, violent pains in her whole body, particularly in her head. The light was sometimes so painful to her eyes, that it would make her shed abundant tears. The senses of hearing, tasting and smelling were all occasions of suffering to her. In this last sense, she participated, by an admirable permission of Divine Goodness, in a manner as painful as remarkable in the gift granted to St. Philip Neri. The presence of persons in a state of mortal sin was sufficient to give her the sensation of a most intolerable stench. As for the sense of taste, it was at last taken from her altogether, or sometimes the taste of food was most nauseous and disagreeable to her. To all these inconveniences she added frequent or rather continual fasts; she used particular abstinence with regard to drinking, sometimes depriving herself of it for a whole week. This last mortification was the more painful

*quatenus et a corde tollatur murmuratio, et in ore versetur gratiarum actio, et vox laudis.—Serm. in Feria IV. Hebdom. Sanct.*

and meritorious as she suffered naturally from continual thirst. When she drank after this long abstinence, she took the utmost care to repress entirely the natural avidity which would have led her to satisfy this imperious need, with immoderate haste. She would take her glass, approach it to her lips, then stop and she would not finish it, until she had entirely conquered nature. She fasted every Wednesday, in honour of St. Joseph, for whom she had great devotion, also every Friday and Saturday; these were her ordinary fasts, to which she joined extraordinary ones, sometimes of forty days together, particularly when she was interceding for some important favour for some neighbour. She made these fasts with so much austerity, that the few persons who knew of them were filled with surprise and admiration. They could not understand how, amidst so much abstinence she could preserve sufficient strength to fulfil with exactitude her other duties.

We shall be able to form an idea of the mortification she practised on these particular occasions, if we reflect on the manner in which she lived at other times. Her only nourishment was a little coffee in the morning at dinner, which she mostly took standing through humility, whilst serving others, she took a little soup and meat with a very little



bread. Sometimes the youngest of her little girls, perceiving that she did not drink, complained of it to her father, making him take notice of it. Then Anna Maria preferring an act of humble condescension to the wishes of her husband, drank a little in order to please him. What she took in the evening was so little substantial, that it could scarcely be reckoned anything. She never accepted anything between meals and never allowed herself to quench her thirst during the great heat of summer, so painful in Rome, and particularly so to her. In the little food which she took, she still found opportunities of mortifying herself. Besides the disgusts and natural bitterness which our Lord sent her, she ingeniously created others for herself. It was particularly remarked, that she took care to reserve for herself anything that was spoiled or of a disagreeable flavour, which her husband or her children would have refused. All these voluntary privations were the effect of her love of God, the continual punishment for the time which she had misspent in the earlier years of her life, the necessary consequence of the movement of grace, which always urges souls, truly desirous of perfection, to works of penance. She was powerfully encouraged in it by the direct and pressing exhortations of her Divine Spouse. She had more than once

received from Him very clear lights on this point. She had drawn from these special lessons of Divine Wisdom, great strength to walk with constancy in this way, and to struggle against nature, which would have led her like others, and perhaps more than others, in quite another direction. She never forgot that if interior crosses and those which are sent by providence, are the greatest treasures for souls, yet, that external and voluntary ones are sometimes the price at which the grace which those interior crosses procure us, must be purchased. She recollected besides what she owed to Divine justice, and finally she ceased not to practise what our Lord had taught her in a special communication of His love: "See, My daughter," He said to her, "see what My sufferings were! I, an innocent Lamb, I willed to endure, not only shame before the people, but to be bound as a thief, to be dragged from one tribunal to another, and the fame of my miracles prevented nothing of this. See how they tore My Body and the cruel death which I afterwards suffered. And all this for love of ungrateful men. Whoever wishes to be My disciple must walk in My footsteps. He who suffers patiently with a spirit of faith and true love is truly My disciple, is truly My son. People do not enter heaven by seeking their own comfort and honour. Suffer in humility

through love of Me; keep silence and bowing down thy head say to thyself: 'I desire all these things, and my Spouse has suffered much greater.' " These words as may easily be believed must have been most efficacious in sustaining this elect soul in the way of suffering and mortification. But is not this lesson, which includes all others, given equally to each one of us? "The Kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—St. Matt. xi. 12.

It is true that rebellious nature often complains and feels such repugnances as the author of the Imitation speaks of, in these words: "To many these words seem hard: Renounce thyself, take up thy cross and follow Jesus. But we may add with him, Much harder will it be to hear, one day, that last sentence: Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. For we must remember that there are no souls for whom voluntary suffering is not a real necessity, to aid them to walk in the path of Christian perfection, and sometimes also to avoid irreparable falls. And of all Christians we may say: In the cross is salvation, in the cross is life, in the cross is protection from our enemies."—Imitation, Book ii. ch. 12.

The past was a lesson for her, and perhaps with a temperament naturally drawn to plea-

sure, as hers was, she was of the number of those souls for whom "without voluntary crosses there is no salvation, nor hope of eternal life."—Im. Book ii, ch. 12. If this was so she showed herself most faithful in undertaking and bearing courageously, what grace required to lead her to salvation. We may repeat also that this fidelity merited for her, in this world, a grace of which the carnal man can little understand the value; the grace to have added to the crosses which she imposed on herself, other sufferings which were not of her choice. To those of which we have already spoken, we must add nervous pains which she suffered in her legs and hands, particularly in that hand to the touch of which God seems to have granted a wonderful power of curing the sick. And in fine, she suffered such frequent and numerous infirmities, that according to the expresion of a faithful witness of her whole life, "She was truly crucified in her whole body;" and of the patience with which she bore all these evils the same witness speaks as follows: "Not only she caused neither trouble or annoyance to her family, when her illness kept her in bed; not only did she suffer all without complaining; but she was the comfort and the consolation of all around her. She inspired all who approached her with joy and peace;

he filled all those who came to her for consolation with courage. Forgetting her own sufferings she was interested, from the goodness of her heart, only in those of others. She was always tranquil, imperturbable and courageous," and, yet, her sufferings were so violent, that a person, who possessed her confidence, spoke of them as follows: "Approaching her bed from time to time in the midst of her agony, I asked her how she felt; she was bathed with perspiration, and she replied: 'They are the pains of death.'"<sup>\*</sup> The person added, "*Fiat voluntas tua,*" Thy will be done. She gathered up her strength and answered with a happy and serene look: "May this holy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

If we add to all these mortifications and sufferings, the use of the discipline, hair shirt, iron chains which she had adopted and continued with her usual remarkable constancy and perseverance, we may form an idea of how far she carried the virtue of mortification, and see how well she understood the extent of the obligations of her penance before Divine justice.

\* As we shall see, she gave the same answer in her last illness.

## CHAPTER XV.

## HER HUMILITY.

“Learn of Me that I am meek and humble of heart.”  
Matt. xi. 29.

Among all the interior and exterior mortifications of a christian, the most perfect and meritorious is doubtless that which directly combats pride. I mean the holy virtue of humility.

The imperious tendency which we all feel to raise ourselves in our own opinion, and in that of others, that sad fruit of the rebellion of our first parents, of their fatal consent to the words of the tempter, “You shall be as gods,” (Gen. iii. 5.) pride, in a word, is the enemy who persecutes the most pure, as well as the most corrupt souls, it reigns on the throne as in the cottage, in the cloister as in the midst of the world; pride, which the shame of a criminal life cannot humble, nor the sight of the most degrading infirmities abate; pride which on the contrary springs from the depths of vice, as well as from the height of a pure life which christian humility does not animate; this was the enemy against which Anna Maria combated in a manner as constant as heroic.

This was the enemy which she generously endeavoured to fight against, profiting by this lesson of the Saviour: "Oh, no, perfection does not consist in reading spiritual books, but in the practice of humility. To acquire it, men must bow down their proud heads and have a generous hand with the poor, thinking that all on earth comes to an end. They must have great compassion for their neighbour, and they must remember, in fine, that before Me all are but beggars who have need of alms." And, thus, she deserved that the following testimony should be given of her: "Although such great lights were given her, and although she was enriched with such precious gifts, that all who approached her, or consulted her, recognized in her an extraordinary wisdom; yet her humility was so profound that she obeyed in every thing, not only her confessor but also, as far as it was possible, each member of her family." In a word she practised in great perfection, that counsel which Eternal Wisdom had suggested to her for a soul, in whose well being she took an especial interest. "Let him be humble with all, submissive to all, obedient to all." The remembrance of the faults of her youth, and the deep feeling of her own misery, a feeling which, like other souls most perfect before God, she constantly experienced, were a

powerful stimulus to her to humble herself and remain confounded before the Eternal justice of God. "I have sinned, O Lord have pity on me!" Such were the expressions of bitter regret, which escaped her heart, happy to have merited constantly after her conversion, to see verified in herself the words of St. Gregory: "The less we see ourselves, the less displeasing we are to ourselves but the more abundantly we receive the light of grace, the more we see in how many things we are reprehensible!"\* and Anna Maria experienced this, in a way which incited her to the perfection of penance, and advancement in the ways of salvation. She had heard, in one of her ineffable communications with Our Lord, this Divine Master say to her these words: "Whosoever lives in fear shall not fall, but he who fears not is already fallen: it was in other words what the Holy Scriptures say: "'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom," Eccli. i. 16. and "Whoever exposes himself to danger shall perish in it," Eccli. iii. 27. She understood this heavenly lesson in its full extent, and faithfully practised it, by diffidence of herself and

\* *Quanto quisque se minus videt, tanto sibi minus displicet; et quanto majus gratiæ, lumen percipit, tanto amplius reprehensibilem se esse cognoscit.*—S. Gregorius Magni, Moral. lib. xxxv. c. 5.



avoiding dangerous occasions, in a word by the constant practice of the deepest humility; and hence she attained, in the end, that grace should be completely victorious in her. But though so humble and living in a continual diffidence of herself, she took care, at the same time, to avoid the equally fatal danger of pusillanimity, another fruit of pride and of that human and perverse fear of which the apostle speaks when he says: "Love casts out fear." 1. St. John iv. 18. Our Lord had with special love made known this last peril to her, saying: "If thou lovest thou must fear, but let thy fear be full of confidence. Take care, My daughter, but be not affrighted; if the devil perceives that thou givest way to fear he has obtained the victory." Wonderful are the mysteries of grace, in souls who walk with security between two perils; wonderful operations of love which the blind world and the carnal spirit of man cannot understand! What will it not be, one day, to see these wonders and grandeurs developed, when the veil of the senses shall have been removed, by the hand of God, when, according to the words of the apostle, we shall contemplate the works of God, and God Himself, without veil, face to face! Another marvel, not less unknown to the spirit of the world, is that love of contempt so deeply rooted by grace in the hearts

of the true imitators of Jesus Christ amidst the natural agitations of pride; Anna Maria gave a remarkable proof of it. "Suffer contempt with humility," said our Lord to her, "keep a profound silence, bow down thy head and say, 'I deserve all these things since my Spouse has suffered much more for me.' Thou oughtest constantly to desire humiliation, since thou art to sanctify thyself in this way. It is more dear to Me to see thee suffer with patience, to see thee practise abnegation of thyself, than all the penance thou couldst do. Penances and desires of mortification are good, when the soul is humble, submissive and obedient. I delight exceedingly in seeing thee renounce thy own will, following after Me." The excellence of humility, of self renunciation, and of mortification of our own will is so great, in the eyes of our Lord, that He returns to it, on several occasions, in a very urgent manner with this humble woman. "Mortify thine own will," He said to her, "and do mine. In this thou shalt find the true way. What esteem above all things is the renunciation of thy own will. Do the things which thou lovest not to do, and do not do those which would please thee. A single violence of this nature done to self is dearer to Me than a year of austere penance." Those who knew th

fidelity with which Anna Maria followed the like lessons were not astonished to see her refuse the praises, which the graces with which our Lord loaded her, drew upon her. Thus in the remarkable cures, of which we shall soon have to say something, one who may be relied on says: "on every occasion she showed such a rectitude and purity of intention, that she never sought anything but to please her God alone. She constantly referred everything to Him, whether in the wonderful cures which she worked, or on other occasions, in which she had procured consolations for her neighbour; she always said to those who thanked her for them, Do not thank me, but thank God and our good and most holy Mother Mary, who intercedes for us, or such, or such another saint." It was this feeling of humility which induced Anna Maria to fly rather than to seek the favours and the benefits of the great. It cannot be doubted that she derived from this humility, the noble liberty and christian frankness, with which she spoke to them when charity required her to have intercourse with them. But above all, her profound humility triumphed in a much more meritorious and glorious manner in the patience, of which she gave proof, amidst the insults and terrible calumnies, of which we have

spoken. Let a proud soul be placed in such a situation, and it will be soon seen whether she will be able to overcome evil with good and consume it with patience, as Holy Scripture says, and particularly those proud spirits of whom our Lord spoke thus to His humble servant : "The man who considers himself prudent, wise and learned, is nothing else but wind and smoke! Such men are lovers of themselves; if things turn out not according to their desires, they are proud and impatient. Instead of occupying themselves with the faults of others, they would do well to attend to their own. They are attached to punctilios of honour, to their own esteem and reputation. And yet they would wish to be My disciples." But as we know, the science of humility is not the science of the genius and pride of man fallen in Adam. It is the science taught by Him Who has put in the mouth of the apostle : "I will destroy the prudence of the prudent, and will reject the wisdom of the wise." 1 Cor. i. 19. It is the science of the poor and little ones, the science of the elect. And it is here that we may exclaim with Eternal Wisdom Itself : "I thank Thee, O Father, because Thou hast hidden these things from the proud and revealed them to little ones," St. Luke x. 21. Here too we may thank that Father of the humble and

the poor, that He has taught us this inflexible law against the pride of us all : " Amen, Amen, I say unto you, except you become as little children, you shall not enter into My Kingdom." St. Matt. xviii. 3. Here too we may entreat Him to give us those lights upon this ineffable science, still so strange to our understandings, but which at least we desire to acquire; upon that science of which, like their Master, His most illustrious disciples continually speak to us. " Humility," they say, " gives light to the understanding, pride hides it."\* We should with earnestness ask of the Spirit of God, a share in the abundant grace granted to the soul of her, whose virtues we are describing. For on this head there can be no doubt, it is evident from the whole tenor of her life, and all her actions, that she had really become meek and humble of heart, and had made herself like those little children, for whom the Kingdom of Heaven will be opened in all its glory.

\* *Lumen intelligentiæ humilitas aperit superbia abscondit.*—S. Greg. Magni. Mor. lib. xxv. c. 12.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS WITH WHICH  
THE SERVANT OF GOD WAS FAVOURED.

These signs shall follow them that believe : they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover. Mark, xvi. 18.

Our Lord, faithful to His promise of preserving in His Church the gift of miracles, is often pleased to make it the means of confounding the pride of the wise, and exalting the lowliness of the humble. He did this in a remarkable manner in the case of Anna Maria, whose humility appears the more admirable, as it was accompanied by such peculiar, and external gifts as called forth the wonder and admiration of others; precious gifts indeed to the Church and most sanctifying; but yet dangerous on some accounts, to those who possess them. Her humility preserved her from these dangers, while her sanctity seconded the grace of which she was thus made the instrument for the salvation of many. The extraordinary lights she had received on the interior of souls, of her own in particular, became through the knowledge she thus had of her own defects, a great, pre-

servative against pride and presumption. In all the wonderful communications which were granted to her, a humble diffidence of herself, and the remembrance of the sins of her younger days, never quitted her a single instant, and this continual sight of her miseries, added to the depression which our Lord permitted her to suffer under her hard trials, so humbled her, that the greater she became in the eyes of God and men, so much the poorer and the meaner did she become in her own eyes, and the choicest blessing which God bestows on souls that are dear to Him, were poured upon her with ever increasing abundance.

The number of sick persons, whose cure had been despaired of, and who had attributed their recovery to her was great. One of the principal families in Rome, owed to her prayers the complete and permanent restoration to health of several children, who had always previously been ailing. The only son of another distinguished family was also cured, by her, of habitual indisposition. One day as she was in company with others, making the pilgrimage of the Seven Churches, a heavy shower of rain came on, which obliged her to take refuge in a house which was near. In this house there was a dying woman to whom the last sacraments had been administered.

Her relations were weeping around her. Anna Maria began to pray and made the sign of the cross over the sick person, with a picture of our Lady, which she always had about her. The rain ceased, and she left the room to continue her devout pilgrimage, but had scarcely reached the foot of the stairs, when the dying woman returned to herself, began to speak immediately, and recovered so wonderfully that her family ran at once to thank their benefactress, with an enthusiasm it would be difficult to describe. From the knowledge of these facts people began to besiege her house with continual entreaties for prayers and favours of a like nature; this was particularly the case at the time when our Lord loaded her with sensible graces.

She had for some time past been in the habit of visiting the church of St. Andrew, belonging to the Jesuits' noviceship at Monte Cavallo, and her great modesty and recollection had often struck Father Rossini, who was then prefect, and he begged her to recommend to God one of his religious, who was ill. She did so very willingly and soon gave him this answer, that illness was not that which most troubled the invalid, but the sufferings of mind which he endured; this the sick man acknowledged, and was greatly comforted. Father Rossini hence conceived



a great esteem for this holy woman, who was so abundantly endowed with grace from on high, and there sprung up between them a union of spirit, which lasted till her death, and which was the occasion of the special lights, which our Lord gave her concerning the society to which Father Rossini belonged, a knowledge being given to her of the violent and unjust persecution of which the society of Jesus was at a later period to become the object. On one occasion the Master of novices begged her to pray for one of his young people, called Valori, who had died shortly before; she replied, that from his death-bed this blessed soul had gone to Heaven, without passing through purgatory; and the good Father, well pleased with such an answer, then made known the virtues of this novice. Whenever Anna Maria prayed for those who were in danger of death, it was made known to her whether or no God would grant the cure she solicited. If according to the eternal decrees of providence, the person was to die, she was seized with excessive pain, and she shed abundant tears in spite of herself. She had learned from experience that this was a sure sign the sick person would die.

She was also chosen more than once to work cures, far more precious and important than those of the body. The spiritual cure

of certain souls, rooted in vice, who had resisted repeated efforts of grace, joined to the exhortations and fervent prayers of other servants of God. What we have said of her love for her neighbour will give an idea of the zeal, with which she undertook this work of conversion; but what powerfully contributed to her marvellous success was the exact and supernatural knowledge of the secrets of the heart, with which she was favoured. When any one in need of her advice came to her, though she had no previous knowledge of them, she saw immediately, their most secret thoughts, and the most hidden actions of their lives, and foretold things to them, which never failed in their accomplishment. It will be easily understood how great an effect her words must have produced, after such evident marks of supernatural knowledge. Astonished and stupified on hearing this poor woman unfold their most hidden thoughts, and lay before them the shameful picture of their lives, the most hardened sinners would yield and throw themselves on their knees, imploring pardon and mercy of God.

This supernatural light guided her with regard to the advice she gave to others on other occasions. If questions were referred to her, concerning the affairs of the Church and state, she would recollect herself and

draw, from the abundance of the light with which she was filled, what was needful for the instruction and guidance of others. By this same gift she was enabled to speak, though with admirable simplicity, of things which astonished the most learned men. "She was wonderfully enlightened both in natural and supernatural things," says one whom we have before quoted, hence when she was consulted on some point of dogma or the highest mysteries, as for example, how to reconcile the doctrine of predestination with the goodness of God, to explain how the Humanity of our Lord, united to the Divinity, could suffer, she gave such clear and just answers that every one was struck with them. It was delightful to hear her speak of the Incarnation of the Word, and of the maternity and virginity of Mary. She would also, by the aid of the same light,\* clear up in a

\*The supreme respect, which we justly profess, for the Sacred Council of Rites, and the commands of the Sovereign Pontiff, prevents us from describing the nature and greatness of this gift, which would astonish the faithful. This miraculous grace was however in perfect conformity with what might be expected from Divine Providence, in an age like ours, in which the natural light of reason has been so much abused. If, some day, as we hope, *the regular process of canonization* on the life of this great servant of God is commenced, this astonishing

moment any point of profane or Sacred history. If, for instance, she fixed her attention in contemplation on the House of Nazareth she saw and could describe with minute detail all the articles of its furniture and the simplicity of the things belonging to the Holy Family. She had many supernatural lights concerning the Sovereign Pontiffs, under whom she lived, and even with regard to our Holy Father Pius IX. himself, although she had quitted this life before he was raised to the Pontificate.\* Soon after his accession, a priest in whom she had placed great confidence told us, that in speaking to him of the persecutions the Church was to suffer, she foretold what impious men would do at Rome, which things we have unhappily seen verified; she told him what the successor of St. Peter would suffer. Wishing to know who would be the Sovereign Pontiff at the time, the priest asked her if he was then among the cardinals, she replied that he was not, but that he was a simple priest in a distant country. And this was

gift, which she possessed for 47 years, will be made known.

Since this was written, the first steps towards her canonization have been taken.

\* She predicted the death of Leo XII. the election and short reign of Pius VIII, the election of Gregory XVI., and the public affairs during his pontificate.

the case, our present Pope was then a simple priest, the Abate Mastai, attached to the mission of Chili. She described him, and said that he would be elected in an extraordinary manner, that he would work reforms, that if men were grateful for them, God would load them with blessings; but if they abused these favours, His allpowerful arm should fall on them to punish them. She said that this Pontiff, chosen according to the heart of God, would be assisted by Him with special lights; that his name should be made known through the whole world, and his praises sounded by all nations; that even the Turks should venerate him, and send to do him honour. She said that he was the holy Pontiff, destined to bear the rage of the tempest, which was to burst forth against the bark of St. Peter; that the arm of God would sustain him and defend him against the impious, who should be humbled and confounded; that in the end he would have the gift of miracles, and that the Church after painful vicissitudes would obtain so brilliant a triumph over her enemies, as to astonish all people.

Pius VII. having often heard of this great servant of God from Monsignore Pedicini, wished her to write to him. Anna Maria then, through obedience, made known to

him the most minute particulars of his childhood, to which the Holy Father replied, smiling, that it was all true.

What she said with regard to the other Popes also proved true, and also that which she said of events in distant parts of the world; as, for instance, of the revolutions in France and Spain, the political situation of Russia, for which she had prayed much, the war in Poland, the most bloody scenes of which she described; she saw disasters which occurred at that time in certain provinces of China, and in other countries no less remote. As to facts relating to private individuals, in which she showed her spirit of Prophecy, they are numberless. One day she met Cardinal Marazzani, who having been lately raised to the cardinalate, was proceeding in state to St. Peter's, according to the custom. Being asked what she thought of this ceremony, Anna Maria raised her eyes a moment, then casting them down said: "To-day all this pomp, in one month in the grave." The Prophecy was accomplished.

Another time Cardinal Cristaldi was going on a journey to Naples; on account of some prediction that he should die on this journey, he was much disquieted, and asked some one to recommend him to the prayers of the servant of God: she answered, "Tell him to

t out without fear, that he will have a good journey there, and a still better on his return, proof of which tell him that on account of such and such reasons, the thought which he has in his mind will not be realized." The cardinal, astonished by this revelation of his secret, struck his hand on his forehead saying: This thought was scarcely known to my head, so carefully had I kept the secret of it in my heart, I had spoken of it to no one and every time it presented itself I put it away. Now I shall go away happy." He tried in vain to discover the privileged soul, from whom he had received so extraordinary a revelation; he would have rewarded her with presents, but these were absolutely refused. He spoke of all these things publicly, even before his departure, and everything happened as Anna Maria had predicted.

At the time of the invasion of Spain by the French under Napoleon, she one day told her confessor, F. Ferdinand of St. Louis, of the Order of the Holy Trinity, of the death of the General of the Order, which by no human means could have been made known in Rome at that moment. She told him that he was on his way from one town to another, with one of his religious, that they had been attacked and massacred by the French, that

they had suffered and died with such resignation and faith that they had no need of prayers. All the facts relative to this death proved true.

Another time the Queen of Etruria was very anxious about her brother, the King of Spain, who, she feared, had fallen into the hands of his enemies, and she sent to Anna Maria begging her to reassure her; the servant of God recollected herself an instant, raised her eyes and then sent word to the Queen, "that she had nothing to fear, for that the king was at liberty." She told her where he was, the persons belonging to the court who were with him, and all in the most minute detail. All proved to be true. This was not the only time that Maria Louisa received consolations of this kind from the servant of God, hence the great confidence she had in her. The Queen has on this account given orders to her servant that if she were in her own country, whenever Anna Maria had anything important to communicate to her, an express should be sent her.

A son of one of those large farmers, who in Rome are called *mercanti di campagna*, had fallen dangerously ill, and was recommended to the prayers of Anna Maria, who said that he would not die this time, but that five years later, he would have a fall from his horse, and



that he would be brought home senseless. Then she added, "you must pray to the Lord; the sick man will recover his senses for a very short time; let him quickly confess and receive Holy Communion, for he will die." She also specified the kind of injury he would receive, from the effects of which he would die. All happened exactly as she had predicted. Thus though at times, this wonderful gift of knowing future and distant events was a source of great consolation to this holy woman, yet it still more often caused her bitter grief and many tears. Above all, when at the hour of their death, she saw sinners falling into hell; she saw distinctly the judgment of these condemned souls, and at the same time, the reasons for their eternal condemnation. Then again she was often consoled by the apparition of souls in purgatory, who came to thank her for the charity she had exercised towards them. Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, her Guardian Angel, and the Saints often appeared to her; some of the communications made, during these frequent apparitions, have already been given. Surely we cannot but judge from these things that this humble woman received favours like to those granted to the greatest saints. God was pleased also to protect her, in a most striking manner even outwardly, so that if any good

was done to her, divine favours were bestowed on her benefactor; while insult or wrong offered to her was speedily punished. We might give many striking examples of this. Amid all these graces she always showed the greatest humility, never speaking of these gifts of God, but to a few whom she assisted in the spiritual life, and with the permission of her confessor. When she did so, it was usually with her eyes cast down, as considering herself completely unworthy of such gifts. And in fact, at first speaking of them to her confessor, he advised that when she heard the divine words, and received such graces, she should beg God to withdraw them from her and communicate Himself to chaste virgins in the cloister, and not to a poor woman like her. She obeyed, but what in humility she asked was not granted.

After her death, God deigned to reward so much virtue by a still more remarkable gift: for she appeared to several persons to give them counsels of perfection, and to predict things which were to happen. Much more might be said, concerning her supernatural gifts, but until the Church has decided on them, it has been judged best not to give them more at length or in greater detail. Still without passing the limits of the reserve we have imposed on ourselves, we may add the

following proof of the wonderful lights with which Anna Maria was favoured.

Count Alexander Michaud, a general and aid-de-camp of the Emperor Alexander of Russia, was in Rome at the moment of the death of this prince. He was filled with grief on account of his sincere affection for the Emperor, as well as from fear of the fatal consequences to the court and his own interests. He told Anna Maria of his anxieties, she consoled him and assured him beforehand "that the new Emperor would treat him with great favour, that he would have a good journey to Russia, though the season was very unfavourable." And everything happened, as this wonderful woman had predicted.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Apoc. xiv. 13.

After so mortified a life, Anna Maria was at length reduced to such a state of suffering, that she was obliged to keep her bed, to which she was confined for more than nine months before her death. During which time she suffered what must have added a bright

degree of glory to the crown, which the other crosses of her life must have merited for her. In spite of the acute and continual sufferings of this long and last trial, she never lost the patience, tranquillity of mind and interior peace, for which she had been for many years so remarkable. She continued like a good mother of a family to direct her household, and to encourage every one, not only by the example of her own heroic patience, but by the cheerfulness and sweetness of her conversation. So far from being exacting in the cares which her condition rendered necessary, she left herself entirely in the hands of those about her, never complaining of anything whatever. She would with the docility of a child do all that was asked of her, and it was necessary to press her urgently, to make her ask for the least thing, which would give her any ease in her sufferings. She passed in this way the end of the year 1836, and the half of the following year, having the consolation of receiving Holy Communion every day, at the Mass said at the altar in the house, in which she lived.

On the 2nd of June, she was seized with fever, to which no attention was at first paid, as it did not appear to be of a serious character, and she had had much worse attacks in other illnesses. The fever left her, and her

family felt no anxiety about its consequences. The doctor, also, who attended her, assured her that there was nothing dangerous in her illness. But she, being warned interiorly in the most positive manner, that her hour was come, only smiled sweetly when these assurances were given her, and prepared herself for the great passage. Little by little she set all the temporal affairs of her house in order, that she might soon have nothing to think of but the things of heaven.

On Sunday evening the fever returned with greater violence. On Monday morning she had scarcely received Holy Communion, when she had a fainting fit, and was reduced to such a state of suffering and agony, that it was thought she would die then; but she recovered a little, sustained by the consolations God poured into her soul at the time of her extatic fainting fit. She sent for the priest who had just said Mass, and who possessed her confidence, and told him the precise moment she should die, with an expression of happiness on her countenance, of which it would be impossible to give any idea. She already enjoyed that happiness of which St. Bernard speaks: "It will come indeed this death; but it will be a sleep for the beloved of the Lord; it will be the entrance into his inheritance, it will be the gate of life, the first

day of refreshment; it will be the ladder of the holy mountain, and the entrance into the wonderful tabernacle which God, not man, has made.'\*

Some time after, Anna Maria sent for her husband, and thanked him for the care which he had taken of her; then all her family recommending them to the care of her eldest daughter, who had been a widow some time she made a most fervent exhortation to all, begging them to observe faithfully the law of God, to have a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and she placed them specially under the protection of the celebrated thaumaturgas St. Philomena, to whom she had a particular devotion. She also recommended to them peace and harmony among themselves. Then having given her last blessing to her children, and bid a last farewell to her husband, she remained at rest, occupying herself with God alone. On Tuesday her sufferings greatly increased and the doctor had recourse to violent remedies, to which she submitted, although she knew they would be injurious to her, wishing thus to imitate our Lord, Who was obedient

\* Veniet quidem mors, sed somnus erit dilectis Domini et ecce hereditas ejus. Erit janua vitæ, erit initium refrigerii, erit sancti illius montis scala, et ingressus in locum tabernaculi admirabilis, quod fixit Deus, et non homo. Serm. xxviii. no. 5.

even unto death; she only made such observations on the subject, as she judged necessary, but as the doctor persisted in his views and as her family wished it, she suffered this last torture without a murmur. On Wednesday she was no better, and asked for the Holy Viaticum, which she received with such ardent feelings of piety, that those present were unable to restrain their tears. She asked one of the religious of the Order for the Redemption of Captives for his blessing, in the name of that Order, of which she was a tertiary; then began her long and painful agony, during which she retained her consciousness. One who knew her intimately speaks of her resignation and imperturbable tranquillity in the midst of the most bitter sufferings: "She bore these multiplied pains, without uttering a complaint, and when I asked her how she felt, she answered in a scarcely audible voice, but with a sweet smile on her lips and peace in her countenance, 'They are the pains of death.'"

On Thursday evening she received Extreme Unction. The sufferings of her agony increased and she lost her speech. The members of her family were then withdrawn (as is usual in Italy). Every necessary care had been taken that she should be attended to the end as her state required, but our Lord required of her another sacrifice, before calling her to

Himself. We give the account we have received of it from her friend. "Our Lord Who had rendered her like Himself, obedient even to death, willed that she should imitate Him also in His three hours of abandonment on the cross, and therefore permitted that all should leave her in her agony. The Fathers of the Magdalen, (of the order of St. Camillus of Lellis,) who were with her, thinking she would live some time, left her, and the vice-curate went to say his office. I went, at the entreaty of the priest and those in the house to take some rest, that I might be able in my turn to remain with her, two hired nurses alone stayed with her, and they went to gossip in a corner of the room. About the middle of the night, I felt strongly urged to rise quickly, which I did; I hastened to the sick room and found Anna Maria in extremity. I ran to call the vice-curate. The prayers for the recommendation of the soul were immediately begun: when these were finished, and an invocation to the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, (to which she had always had great devotion,) was being made, she gave up her blessed soul to God, on Friday night as she had herself predicted. She died, leaving us every reason to believe, that God had called her to receive the reward of her virtues, in the mansions of eternal glory," Thus all that this generous soul had



predicted of herself, and her death many years before, was verified, for to this same person, of whom we have been speaking, she had said twenty years before, that she should be abandoned by all at the time of her death, and yet at other times she assured this friend that she would be present at it. Nor could the person understand how these two contradictory things could be reconciled, but after their accomplishment, she well understood their explanation.

The news of this blessed death was immediately communicated to Cardinal Pedicini, one of the most constant admirers of her virtue, and one of the few witnesses of it, who could appreciate it in its full extent. He hastened to give notice of it to the Cardinal Vicar of His Holiness, that, at the funeral, fitting honour might be paid to the precious remains.

During the whole of Friday and Saturday, the body of the deceased was laid out at her own house; towards the evening of the second day it was carried to the Parish Church of St. Maria, in Via Lata, where it remained during the whole of Sunday; after which it was interred in the New Cemetery of the Campo Verano. Before being carried to the Cemetery, the leaden coffin, in which the body was placed, was sealed by the advocate Rosatini.

According to the instructions of the Holy Father, communicated by the Cardinal Vicar she was buried in a grave near the Mortuary Chapel of the Cemetery.

On a marble slab covering the grave was inscribed :

D. O. M.

Anna Maria Antonia Gesualda Taigi,  
nata Giannetti, in Sienna,  
il xxx Maggio, MDCLXIX.

Morta in Roma il IX. Guigno, MDCCCXXXVII.

Tertiaria Scalza,  
Dell' ordine della SSma. Trinita.

To the most good and great God,  
Anna Maria Antonia Gesualda Taigi,  
(Maiden name Giannetti.)

born at Sienna, May xxx, 1769,

died at Rome, June 9th, 1837;

discalced tertiary,

of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## HER REPUTATION FOR SANCTITY.

"The memory of the just is with praises, and the name of the wicked shall rot." Prov. x. 7.

In spite of the care she took to hide her virtues, and the extraordinary graces, with which she was favoured, from the world, Anna Maria was, as we have seen, the object of the just admiration of persons the most distinguished for rank and piety. The poor held her in great veneration, and called her Anna Maria the saint, and when they met her in the streets, and even in the churches, they would come up to her respectfully to ask her prayers or advice. Priests, religious, and persons holding high ecclesiastical offices visited her also for the same purpose, and with equal respect, and seculars of high rank did the same.

The venerable Pontiff, Pius VII. esteemed and respected her. Leo XII. was so good to her, as during one of her illnesses, to send his own surgeon to attend her. Several ecclesiastics, who died in the odour of sanctity, had very great veneration for her, among others, the venerable Strambi. This prelate, wish-

ing, on the return of Pius VII. from France to lay down the burden of the charge of souls and to live in retirement, sought to resign his bishopric, and things had been so arranged as to lead him to flatter himself that his resignation would be accepted: in consequence of the great confidence he had in Anna Maria, on the evening preceding the day on which he was to go to the Pope, he sent to tell her that the next day he was going to give in his resignation, and therefore she should pray for him. She, raising her eyes to heaven and recollecting herself a short space, quickly gave the following reply to the messenger: "Tell his Lordship that to-morrow the Pope will not receive him favourably, that he will not accept his resignation, and will order him to set out immediately for his diocese." On receiving this message, Mgr. Strambi smiled, and said to the confidential messenger who brought it: "For once this holy soul is mistaken, for you must know, my son, that I have arranged all with his Eminence, the Secretary of State, who has spoken to the Holy Father, and I am going rather to thank than to entreat." Our Lord permitted that the priest, who had been the bearer of the message, and who accompanied Mgr. Strambi to the audience, should be present at the reception the Holy Father gave

him, for, in crossing the antechamber where they were waiting, the Pope saw the prelate and turning round said to him, with a serious manner: "We already know what you are come here for! all plead ill-health. I myself am weak and I have to bear the burden of the whole world. And where are we to seek for subjects for the bishoprics? Among scavengers? Everybody wants to resign...Go, go back at once!" and he left him abruptly. Upon which Mgr. Strambi, after having reflected a little, asked the Lord of the Chamber, Mgr. Doria, for a private audience with His Holiness, about the concerns of his diocese, and this being ended, he got into his carriage with the priest, his companion, to return to his residence at the Convent of the Passionist Fathers. Both continued silent until on reaching the Arch of Titus, Mgr. Strambi turned to the priest and said: "Did you hear, my son? I shall be at rest about it now, I shall think no more of it." The priest having told this to Anna Maria, she assured him that his lordship would come to spend his last days in Rome as he desired, but that it would be to bring his bones there, for he would then have a very short time to live.

After the lapse of some time, his ill health increasing, Mgr. Strambi again tried to

get his resignation accepted, but without success, and he lost all hopes of ending his days in Rome and wrote to his friend that he might hear what Anna Maria said about it; she again gave him the same assurance as before. Not long after Pius VII. died, and Leo XII. was elected Pope, and sent for Mgr. Strambi to come to live in Rome as his counsellor; the holy Bishop wishing to have the aid of Anna Maria's counsels, appointed a fixed hour every evening for his confidential friend, the priest, to come to him, that he might communicate to him, with due caution, the affairs of the Church and the state, in order to learn, through him, her opinion on them, and the wisdom and prudence of the answers and advice she gave always filled him with admiration. Soon afterwards the Pope became so ill, as to cause great fears for his life. In great distress, Mgr. Strambi sent to the servant of God, who immediately said to the messenger, smiling: "The Pope will not die now, Monsignore himself is going." "What do you say," replied the messenger, "his lordship is quite well, robust and healthy." She answered: "Well, in a few days, he will be laid out in the church." It was then near Christmas, and on the first day of the new year, the body of the holy bishop was laid out, in the

church of the Passionist Fathers. He was suddenly seized with an apoplectic fit, so that he lost speech and consciousness. There is no doubt but that he himself had had some intimation concerning it; for the evening before, contrary to his custom, he had tenderly embraced his friend, the priest, thanking him and saying: "My son, love God with all your heart," and in the Pope's anteroom he spoke of nothing but Paradise. It is said that he had offered his life in sacrifice to God for that of the Holy Father, and it is believed that our Lord had made this known to Anna Maria. and that the virtuous prelate himself understood, some days before his death, that his sacrifice had been accepted. The Fathers who were with him, were much grieved at not being able to give him the Holy Communion; in vain they watched for a momentary return of consciousness, while the sick man was fast sinking into eternity. The same priest of whom we have spoken, went to the servant of God to beg her to obtain this favour from the Divine Goodness, that the holy bishop might be able to receive Communion. She was knitting a stocking when he entered, she put it down, placed her elbows on the table, covering her face with her hands, and her head bowed down, she recollected herself in God a moment, and then gave the following an-

swer: "Tell those who are with him to begin mass tomorrow morning at the dawn of day, the sick man will recover consciousness, and will be able to receive Holy Communion, he will also have half an hour to make his thanksgiving, then the lethargy will return, and will carry him to eternal repose;" and this was all precisely verified.

Signor Vincenzo Pallotti, who died in the beginning of 1850, with great reputation of sanctity, both in Rome and elsewhere, had so much faith in Anna Maria, of whose supernatural lights he had had good proof, and whose special protection he had experienced even after her death, called her, with a holy confidence, *his Secretary and ambassador to the Holy Trinity for his congregation.*

Among other documents relative to this holy woman, is the testimony of the virtuous priest, of whom we have spoken, written and sealed by him. Father Bernard Clausi of the Minute Fathers of St. Francis of Paul, a man of great virtue and reputation, received great assistance in the sufferings of mind he endured, from the light and counsels she gave him, through the medium of a friend.

Signor Roberti, superior of the congregation of the Mission of the Lazarists in Rome, in his last illness, desiring to die, that he might be united to God continually sent to the



servant of God to know how many days must elapse before he should pass to the other life, and when she answered that he must wait some time, was not a little afflicted. At last the much desired moment came and Anna Maria saw this blessed soul fly to paradise from his death-bed. She had before seen the soul of Signor Folchi, a young priest of the congregation, take its flight to heaven in the same way. The virtue of this last was so great that they thought of beginning the process for his canonization.

Monsignor Basilici, bishop of Sutri and Nessi, a man of great virtue and remarkable for his devotion to St. Philomena, desiring to pray for the deceased Anna Maria in his mass, confessed to one of his friends, that he felt his heart inundated with consolation and urged rather to recommend himself to her prayers than to pray for her.

Among Seculars also, whether inhabitants of Rome or strangers, we have seen how great her reputation for sanctity was ; nor did it die with her ; distinguished strangers coming from distant countries, where her fame had spread, showed their esteem and confidence, by the frequent visits they desired to make to her tomb.

In Rome itself the most honourable testimonies were not wanting, although on account

of their terror of the cholera, which had already invaded both the north and south of Italy, people tried to hear as little as possible of deaths, making no enquiries about those who had died, and hence for some days, the death of this great servant of God was but little known; but the news of it soon began to spread, and then it was difficult to reply to all the persons, who wished to hear every particular of it. One of these, Canon Buffalo, (founder of the Institute of the Precious Blood, and who died in the odour of sanctity at the end of that same year,) speaking of the great loss the city of Rome had sustained in the death of this holy woman, said: "When the Lord calls souls that are dear to Him to Himself, it is a sign that He means to punish; let us prepare ourselves for scourges." In fact the cholera soon broke out in Rome, and caused terrible ravages there. The cemetery of St. Lawrence was soon filled with the bodies of those who had died of the cholera, and yet, in spite of the universal terror, numbers of strangers and inhabitants of the city visited Anna Maria's grave through devotion.

Cardinal Odescalchi, vicar of His Holiness, obliged the priest, who for twenty years had been a constant witness of the holiness of this great servant of God, to collect together, though

in a private form, the documents relative to her life, authorizing him by a rescript to do so, so that we are now possessed of the most precious documents for the process of canonization, (if it should be God's will that it should be begun,) which the death of the witnesses would later have made it impossible to collect.

On account of the piety of the faithful at two different times, portraits of Anna Maria were published; for the same reason we publish this short notice of her life, to which much may hereafter be added. In this work, which we thank God for having allowed us to write, looking upon it as a special grace for our own edification, we have spoken with the truth and simplicity suited to the recital of so holy and unobtrusive a life: God grant that we may always have done so with the spirit of piety and devotion not less necessary.

We conclude, O pious soul! admirable model of hidden perfection, begging you if as we sweetly hope, God has received you into His glory, to obtain for us who have had the happiness of writing these lines and for all those who may read them, the grace to die to ourselves and to live wholly in God, as it has been given to you to do, in so admirable a manner.—Fiat, fiat.

## APPENDIX.

## LETTER AND DEPOSITION OF CARDINAL PEDICINI.

“From the Apostolic Chancery,  
June 10th. 1837.

Most Reverend Eminence,

It having pleased our Lord to call to its eternal repose the soul of Anna Maria Taigi, who lived No. 7 St. of the holy apostles, whom the undersigned Cardinal Vice Chancellor had the happiness of knowing and visiting, during the space of thirty years, admiring her extraordinary gifts, and the wonderful lights with which God had enriched her, equally with the greatest saints, and of which he has had thousands of proofs, both relating to himself, and events in the Church and the world, which she made known with great precision, long before they happened, and which were minutely verified—which things cannot certainly be attributed to anything but extraordinary light from God; wherefore the undersigned cardinal considers it his duty to give notice of it to your Eminence, in order that the body of this happy soul, its com-

panion in the exercise of such great virtues, may receive the fitting honours, usual in these rare cases.

If it has pleased God in His secret judgments to keep this highly favoured soul hidden from the world, (although indeed she was known to persons of great reputation, as Pius VII. of holy memory, who conversed with her several times, to Leo XII. by what Monsignor Strambi made known to him of her, and many other persons of great reputation in the city, as well as strangers,—as for instance, Monsignor Flaget, who visited her in her illness, with great satisfaction before he quitted the Capital. Who can know the secrets of God, whether later He may not manifest His mercies to this happy creature, as we have reason to believe He will?

The cardinal who writes takes this opportunity of expressing his most profound respect for your Eminence, and humbly kisses your hand.

Your Eminence's most devoted servant,  
Charles Marie, Cardinal Pedicini."

Besides this general attestation, Cardinal Pedicini left before his death on account of the rescript of which we have spoken another deposition in a private form. This deposition is divided into 14 manuscripts, all sealed, with

an authentic declaration dated from the Palace of the Chancellorship, 6th Feb. 1841: this declaration, which contains a summary of all the depositions, is signed by the Cardinal, F. John of the Visitation, General, and F. Antony of the Mother of God, procurator-general of the Trinitarians, witnesses; and by D. Raphael Natali, priest charged with taking particular information on the virtues of Anna Maria. It is also furnished with three analogous seals.

The Cardinal declares in it that he intends to give to his deposition all the force which it would have, if accompanied with every legal formality, and consequently he means to make use of all the privileges belonging to him, which might be necessary and might corroborate his deposition.

The depositions and declarations of the confessor, or other persons in a position to appreciate Anna Maria, are preserved. All these documents form good sized manuscripts the importance of which will be appreciated in the process of canonization, if it takes place.



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AUTHOR

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